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A HISTORY OF UNITARIANISM

A History of Unitarianism

In Transylvania, England, and America

BY

EARL MORSE WILBUR, D.D.

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TO MY WIFE

*Whose constant encouragement
and hearty cooperation
through many years
have made it possible
to complete this work*

PREFACE

THE AUTHOR's earlier work, *A History of Unitarianism: Socinianism and Its Antecedents* (Cambridge, 1945) was designed, though no indication was given in the preface or elsewhere, as the first of two volumes on the general subject. The present volume therefore is to be taken as the second or complementary volume of the work, and any cross-references to the former work are given as to Volume I.

The present book has been written with constant reference to available sources, and the author's obligation to various persons for valued help given still stand; but further acknowledgment is here made to Dr. Alexander Szent-Iványi, sometime Suffragan Bishop of the Unitarian Church in Hungary, who has carefully read the manuscript of the section on Transylvania and made sundry valued suggestions; to Dr. Herbert McLachlan, formerly Principal of the Unitarian College, Manchester, who has performed a like service for the chapters of the English section; and to Dr. Henry Wilder Foote for his constant interest and for unnumbered services of kindness in the course of the whole work.

I can not take my leave of a subject that has engaged my active interest for over forty-five years, and has furnished my chief occupation for the past fifteen years, without giving expression to the profound gratitude I feel that in spite of great difficulties and many interruptions I have been granted life and strength to carry my task through to completion.

E. M. W.

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

June, 1952

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**A HISTORY OF UNITARIANISM
IN TRANSYLVANIA, ENGLAND, AND AMERICA**

CHAPTER I

TRANSYLVANIA AND ITS PEOPLE

IN THE TWO previous divisions of this history we have considered the rise and development of the religious movement with which we are concerned, from its diverse origins widely scattered in various countries of western Europe, through its formal organization and mature state as one of the recognized confessions of Protestantism, to its decline and gradual dissolution and absorption into other families of European Christianity. Its corporate existence in Poland may be dated from the meeting of its first synod in 1565 to the dissolution of its last two exile churches, at Kolozsvár in 1793 and at Andreaswalde in 1811.

We have now to follow the less known but extremely interesting history of another branch of this same movement, which took organized form at almost the same time with that in Poland, yet independently of it, ran its own course parallel with that of Socinianism, though largely separate from it, as long as the latter survived, and since then has bravely outlived it to the present day; although well-nigh two centuries and a half passed before its members became aware that there were in England vigorous and expanding groups of churches holding their faith and bearing their very name of Unitarian, while these in turn became conscious of having brethren in a remote and all but unknown land.

The seat of this movement was in Transylvania,¹ a country comprising the eastern quarter of the old Kingdom of Hungary, and in extent about a half larger than Switzerland, or two thirds the size of the State of Maine. It is mountain-girt on all sides, on the north and east by the

¹ From the Middle Ages this name was applied by the Magyars of Hungary proper to the country beyond (*trans*) the forested region (*sylvania*) lying to the east of the Great Plain of Hungary. The Germans called it Siebenbürgen (and the Poles by the equivalent name Siedmiogród) in supposed reference to seven fortified towns built by Saxon immigrants; though some suggest a derivation from Szeben, the most important of these towns. The Hungarian name is Erdély, forest. Cf. Josephus Benkő, *Transsylvania* (Vindobonae, 1778), i, 3 f.

rugged Carpathians, on the south by the lofty Transylvanian Alps, and on the west by a lower range overlooking the Great Plain of Hungary. It is well watered by several rivers that break through the mountain boundaries on their way to join the Tisza (Theiss) or the Danube. The climate is temperate, the mountains abound in mineral wealth of great variety, including the richest gold mines in Europe, which have been worked since Roman times, and the forests yield abundant timber. The surface of the land is predominantly hilly, being diversified by many small valleys; and while the enthusiasm of travelers who have called this the Switzerland of Hungary, whose scenery is all beauty, unique and incomparable, may be thought extravagant, yet it is all in all a fair and pleasing land, which displays much wild beauty and not a few scenes of mountain grandeur.

Transylvania was well known to the later Roman Empire as the province of Dacia Mediterranea; and lying on the main route from western Europe to the near and the far East, it was much traversed by traders and their caravans, as well as later by the Crusaders and their armies. But after the Turks had taken Constantinople and were pressing their conquest of Europe in the sixteenth century, this old road to Persia and India was found too dangerous, and Transylvania became almost a forgotten land. So little known was it abroad that at the end of the seventeenth century a native writer complained² that there were not four persons to be found even in France who knew that there was in Europe such a place as Transylvania. Inhabited by a people whose language it is extremely difficult for a western European to master, remote from the European centres of commerce or culture, and without railroad connections until well after the middle of the nineteenth century, Transylvania was, save to an occasional venturesome traveler or huntsman, still a little known country until less than a hundred years ago.³ It is in this country that the Unitarian religion has, in the face of cruel and almost perpetual oppressions and persecutions,

² Bethlem Miklós, *Memoires historiques*, etc. (La Haye, 1739), cited by Robert Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches* (Cambridge, 1792), p. 627.

³ For comprehensive and interesting accounts of Transylvania in its various aspects, see Benko, *op. cit.*, Auguste de Gerando, *La Transylvanie et ses habitants*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1845), John Paget, *Hungary and Transylvania*, 2 vols. (London, 1850), Charles Boner, *Transylvania, its products and its people* (London, 1865), G. von Rath, *Siebenbürgen Reisebeobachtungen und Studien* (Heidelberg, 1888), Emily Gerard, *The Land beyond the Forest*, 2 vols. (London, 1888),

maintained an unbroken and heroic existence during well-nigh four centuries.

Transylvania appears above the horizon of authentic history in the first century after Christ. Old place-names surviving through the centuries indicate that its primitive inhabitants, known to the Romans as Dacians, were of Slavic stock. Soon after the middle of the first century their various tribes were united under their King Decebalus, whose armies the Emperor Domitian was unable to hold in check; but early in the second century Trajan defeated them, connected their country with the Roman Empire by a splendid military road, the *Via Trajana* bridging the Danube, organized the administration of the new province, garrisoned its colonies with Roman soldiers, and returning to Rome commemorated his conquest in the noble *Trajan's Column*, whose sculptures give us a contemporary pictorial record of the inhabitants. The Romans continued to exploit the gold and other treasures of the country until 274, when a rising of the Dacians and the pressure of Gothic hordes just beginning their invasions compelled them to abandon the country. Their army and most of their colonists withdrew south of the Danube into Moesia, leaving many monuments of their occupation which survive to this day. The barbarian invasions of the third and fourth centuries effectually destroyed Roman culture in these parts, for after the Goths, who occupied the land for a century, came in succession hordes of Huns in the fourth century, of Gepidae in the fifth, of Avars and Lombards in the sixth, and Magyars in the eighth and ninth; to be succeeded by the frightful raids of Tatar hosts at frequent intervals, sometimes almost annually, for more than four centuries, and by the conquering armies of the Turks for two centuries more. These repeated incursions of cruel enemies, to which Transylvania was peculiarly subject, as lying on the border-line between the settled civilization of western Europe and the restless barbarism of the Asiatic frontier, were all characterized by devastation with fire and sword, outrage, murder and slavery, and were repeatedly followed by famine and pestilence. If Transylvania long lagged behind western Europe in some of the features of civilization, while at the same time its people developed striking qualities of sturdy resistance and exalted heroism, the reason is not hard to discover.

Of all these barbarian invasions there are two, those of the Huns and the Magyars, that especially concern us here, since they left a permanent

mark upon the country and its population. The Huns were a nomadic race, dwelling near the Caspian sea, who in the first third of the fifth century invaded the Roman province of Pannonia (western Hungary), led by their chief Attila, who became known to history as 'the scourge of God,' sent by Heaven to chastise unworthy Christians for their sins. Crowned King of the Huns in 428, he pushed his conquests far into western Europe until he was checked at Chalons in 451. After his death in 454 his followers did not long hold together, but returned whence they had come, leaving behind them only a frightful memory and their name, which was later attached to the Hungary that they had ravaged.

Immemorial tradition preserves the belief that when after their defeat they were gradually driven back out of Pannonia some thousands of them became separated from the main body and found themselves stranded against the mountains of eastern Transylvania where they formed permanent settlements; and that it is their descendants that still populate that district and bear the name of Szeklers (Hung., *Székel*; Latin, *Siculi*),⁴ still speaking the Hungarian tongue, and observing many of their ancient customs, a brave, sturdy, honest, intelligent, independent race of yeomen, prizing their freedom above all things else. They occupy with their farms the four eastern counties of the country, whose metropolis of Maros-Vásárhely is their only considerable city. Traditionally they are all 'nobles,'⁵ since in return for their services as guardians of the eastern frontier against invasion they were for centuries exempted from taxation and were allowed other special privileges. Though they still cling fondly to the tradition of their noble status, the old distinctions of class and privilege now no longer obtain, and in rank and civil obligations they are on a level with other free citizens. Ever since the last quarter of the sixteenth century a good proportion of them have been Unitarian in religion, and thus form the oldest Unitarian churches in the world.

Four centuries after the Huns the Magyars came from southeastern Russia, a kindred people speaking the same language with them, but of mixed origin, apparently related to both the Finns and the Turks. About 895 nearly a million of them swarmed over the northern Carpa-

⁴ Cf. Benkő, *op. cit.*, i, 388 f; Gerando, *Transylvanie*, ii, chap. 24.

⁵ Not in the English sense of the word, as denoting superior social rank, but rather as freeholders, freemen owning their own lands.

thians under the leadership of Arpád, swept over all Hungary reducing the inhabitants to virtual slavery, and pushing their conquests further ravaged Europe for two generations until decisive defeats by the German Emperors Henry I and Otho I (930 and 955) drove them back across the Danube and forced them to adopt a settled life. At length converted to Christianity, they were formally received into the Empire under King Stephen. Besides Hungary proper, the Magyars spread over into Transylvania, of which they occupy eight northern and western counties. Considerably more influenced by western customs and culture than are the more rustic Szeklers, they have much in common with them in the racial traits of self-reliance, proud spirit and love of liberty; while their national temperament and institutions are said to resemble those of England and America much more closely than do those of any of the other continental nations.⁶

A third national group came into the land more peaceably. About the middle of the twelfth century King Géza II of Hungary, finding his country much wasted by war and famine, and the southern part of Transylvania almost uninhabited, invited colonists from Germany to come and settle in his dominions, in the enjoyment of special privileges, in order that they might repopulate the waste places and introduce the trades in which they were skilled. From various districts in what was then known as Saxony, from the middle and lower banks of the Rhine and from Flanders, came large numbers of the common people who had been oppressed by the nobles, or overwhelmed by great inundations of the sea. They formed compact settlements in northern and north-eastern Hungary, and especially in the counties in the southern part of Transylvania, and came presently to be known as Saxons. They are an industrious, thrifty and educated but somewhat clannish people, upon whom the Magyars have traditionally looked with a rather unfriendly eye as intruders in their land. They have never become assimilated to their Hungarian neighbors, nor have they much intermarried with them, but still stand aloof, preserving little changed the German dialect, the customs, costumes and institutions that they brought with them; so that if a traveler or scholar of to-day would see a vivid picture of life as it was in lower Germany eight hundred years ago, he could not do better than pay a visit to the 'Saxon' communities of Tran-

⁶ In 1222 (but seven years after Runnymede) King Andrew's *aurea bulla* was granted them, nearly as liberal in its provisions as the Magna Carta.

sylvania.⁷ The Saxons have remained steadfastly Lutheran since the early Reformation.

These three racial groups, the Magyars, the Szeklers and the Saxons, comprise what were known as the three united 'nations,' each with its individual territory, laws and administration, which agreed upon special political rights and privileges, and composed the government of Transylvania under a union entered into at the Diet of Torda in 1545 when Transylvania had separated from Hungary, and repeatedly confirmed thereafter.⁸ Besides these three privileged 'nations,' there were other important elements in the population. First of all the Wallacks, as they were then called.⁹ These were the submerged half, the lowest stratum of the population, widely scattered among the other 'nations' as hewers of wood and drawers of water, the people of the soil, ignorant,¹⁰ degraded in manners and morals, highly prolific, little better than serfs, and bitterly persecuted. Before the twelfth century there is no mention in any trustworthy source of their existence in Transylvania, hence it seems probable that they were immigrants from the Balkans, whence about the thirteenth century they came in large numbers into Transylvania, rapidly spreading over all the country as its shepherds and common laborers. In religion they all adhered solidly to one or another branch of the Orthodox Greek Church.¹¹

⁷ In the summer of 1933 the writer and his wife had the enviable experience of attending, as appointed delegates representing the Unitarian churches of America, the ceremonies at the inauguration at Hermannstadt of a new Bishop of the Saxon churches, which took place with all the picturesque pomp and ceremonial handed down from mediaeval Germany.

⁸ Cf. Benko, *Transsylvania*, I, 358 ff; *Approbatae*, Pars III, tit. 1.

⁹ The name Wallack, and its equivalent in various languages of Europe, often seems simply to denote Italian; but in the course of time it had come to have such connotations of inferiority and contempt that at the time of the Hungarian revolution of 1848, when a new order was being established, their Bishop formally demanded that they be henceforth called, as they called themselves, Romanians, and the old name has fallen into disuse. Cf. Benko, *op. cit.*, I, 474 ff; Rath, *Siebenburgen*, p. 154.

¹⁰ It was said that as late as the middle of the nineteenth century only a single Wallack periodical was published in all Hungary for their population of two and a half million. Cf. Andrew Chalmers, *Transylvanian Recollections* (London, 1880), p. 78.

¹¹ Their ultimate origin is obscure, and has given rise to much speculation, not uncolored by racial feeling. They may have been pre-Roman Dacians, possibly of Celtic stock; but their language, which has clear affinities with Latin, and yet closer ones with Italian, betrays influence of the Roman occupation. It has long been their proud boast that they are descendants of Trajan's Roman soldiers. With these, as also with the Roman colonists who followed them, there may have been more or less intermarriage, hence their traditional claim. Some evidence also points to an intermixture with an Italian

In small numbers there were also the Gypsies, whose origin is still in dispute, and who mysteriously appeared from the East about 1523, some of them to form settled communities and some to lead wandering lives; and also scattered groups of Armenians, Jews and a half-dozen other peoples that together make up the so-called 'tolerated nations,' who were allowed to dwell in the country, but had no political rights as citizens and might not hold public office.¹² All these national elements dwelt peaceably side by side in Transylvania, yet as individual units, little mingling and seldom intermarrying, and usually dwelling in separate village communities in the country districts, or in separate quarters in the towns; for Transylvania was no racial melting-pot, but rather a singularly interesting and variegated patchwork of distinct races and cultures. It should be kept in mind, however, that what has thus far been said of the racial groups in Transylvania, while it is true of the greater part of the history we are about to consider, does not hold good to nearly so great an extent of the period since the Hungarian revolution at the middle of the nineteenth century; an important result of which was that the different races were placed on an equal footing, that equal taxation of all classes was introduced, and that the old antagonisms of race and religion were softened or obliterated, as all devoted themselves unitedly to the common cause of a free Hungary. Enough has now been said to furnish a clear and distinct racial and political background against which the religious history may be viewed.

After long centuries of obscurity the Kingdom of Hungary emerged clearly upon the surface of history with the advent of its great King Stephen I who was crowned in the year 1000, and it enjoyed national independence for nearly 700 years, until it became associated with Austria under a single King. Transylvania was one of the divisions of this kingdom, locally governed by its own Hungarian Vaivode until 1556, when it asserted its independence and maintained it with more or less success until it became incorporated in the Empire near the end of the seventeenth century.¹³ The period of Hungarian history with

shepherd people immigrating from the Dalmatian coast before their incursion into Transylvania. Cf. G. D. Teutsch, *Geschichte der siebenbürger Sachsen* (2. Aufl., Leipzig, 1874), i, 7; Rudolf Bergner, *Siebenbürgen* (Leipzig, 1884), pp. 244-249; E. Robert Roesler, *Dacier und Rumänen* (Wien, 1866); *id.*, *Romänische Studien* (Leipzig, 1871).

¹² Cf. Benkő, *op. cit.*, i, 471-473.

¹³ To be reunited with Hungary in 1848.

which we are here to be immediately concerned may be dated from the battle of Mohács, 1526. Ever since the Turks had captured Constantinople in 1453 their rulers had been steadily pushing their conquests north and west, with the apparent design of mastering all Europe. In 1526 Solyman (Suleiman) the Magnificent, last of the great conquering Sultans, who had become Sultan six years before, and who first and last launched seven campaigns against Hungary, inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Hungarians at Mohács, on the Danube 150 miles south of Buda-Pest. The Hungarians were outnumbered three to one, and the battle lasted but an hour and a half. Only a few hundred or thousand escaped by flight, King Louis II himself was drowned as he fled, a great part of the nobility and leaders of the kingdom fell, and altogether 200,000 are said to have been either slain or taken captive.¹⁴ Solyman pushed on to the capital at Buda which he found deserted, and having plundered it returned with his spoils to Constantinople.

Two candidates now arose to compete for the vacant throne. The Hungarian national element had long been jealous of the gradual encroachment of western influences in the government of their country, and favored a rule quite independent of foreign influence. The opposite element sought alliance with the House of Hapsburg and closer relations with the German Empire. The former were the first to act. As soon as he learned that the Sultan had withdrawn from the country, John Zápolya (*Lat.*, Johannes Scepusius), Count of Zips, the most wealthy and powerful of the Hungarian nobility, and Vajvode of Transylvania, hastened to the capital at Buda. He had from his youth been so highly esteemed by the nobility that all eyes turned toward him as successor to the throne in case it should fall vacant. Such of the leaders therefore as had survived the carnage at Mohács or had come with John from Transylvania, realizing the great danger in delay, took counsel and summoned a meeting of the Diet at Székesfehérvár (Stuhlweissenburg). Here he was elected without opposition, and was duly crowned by the Archbishop of Esztergom (Gran) three days after the funeral of the late King.¹⁵

Meantime the German party, who believed that the safety of Hungary in its present weakened state lay rather in alliance with the Hapsburgs

¹⁴ Cf. Wolfgang de Bethlen, *Historia de rebus Transylvanicis* (ed. 2, Cibinii, 1782-85), I, 32-39.

¹⁵ Cf. Bethlen, *op. cit.*, I, 39-72.

under the shelter of the Empire than in a consolidated Hungarian State, after taking counsel with the widowed Queen Maria (who rejected John's proposal of marriage), summoned an electoral Diet which met at Pozsony (Pressburg) the month after John's coronation. Only a few of the barons appeared, for the greater part of the country had declared for John; but these few pronounced his election invalid,¹⁶ and unanimously elected the Arch-Duke Ferdinand of Austria, who had also lately been chosen King of Bohemia,¹⁷ and moreover was brother of the Emperor Charles V, who promised his aid against the Turk.¹⁸ Ferdinand was immediately occupied with his affairs in Bohemia, but the next summer he declared war against John, soon took the capital at Buda, and invading Hungary won so much ground that John fled to Poland; and then returning to Buda was proclaimed King, and was crowned at Székesfehérvár with the same crown and by the same Archbishop as in the case of John nearly a year before.¹⁹ King Sigismund I of Poland, whose first Queen Barbara Zápolya had been sister of John, tried in vain to bring about peace between the rival Kings; and when nothing else availed John appealed to the Sultan for aid. Welcoming such an opportunity for further conquests, he invaded Hungary with a great army, again took Buda and came near to taking Vienna, restored the whole land, Buda and the crown to John, and withdrew, for the Emperor had disappointed the hopes that he would drive the Turks from the land. Intermittent warfare between the two Kings now continued for ten years until Ferdinand, seeing that he was making no progress, made peace at Nagyvárad (Grosswardein) in 1538. The treaty provided that John should retain his title of King of Hungary, and keep the rule of Transylvania and of the territory in Hungary that he then possessed, leaving the rest to Ferdinand as also King of Hungary; that if John should die without male issue the whole country should fall to Ferdinand; but that if he left a son he should keep only his father's hereditary possessions, and should bear only the title of Duke of Zips. John renounced his treaty with the Sultan, and both Kings signed the present treaty, though for fear of offending the Sultan it was never published nor confirmed.²⁰

¹⁶ Cf. Bethlen, *op. cit.*, i, 80.

¹⁷ He had married the sister of the late King, and thus was a logical successor.

¹⁸ Cf. Eugen Czuday, *Geschichte der Ungarn* (Wien, 1900), ii, 6 f.

¹⁹ Cf. Bethlen, *op. cit.*, i, 71, 112.

²⁰ Cf. Bethlen, *op. cit.*, i, 236-263.

A few months later John, now secure in his royal title, was able to marry Princess Isabella, daughter of King Sigismund I and Queen Bona of Poland, whose acquaintance we have made in the previous division of this history. The royal wedding and the following coronation took place at Székesfehérvár, and the King and Queen took up their residence at Buda. Their happiness was of short duration. In the following year King John, after subduing a local rebellion in Transylvania, fell seriously ill of a fever. While thus ill he received news that Isabella had borne him a son at Buda (July 7, 1540). Two weeks later John died at Szász-Szebes (Mühlbach). Immediately after the royal funeral at Székesfehérvár a great crowd of the leading men and of all the nobility present elected the infant Prince, John Sigismund,²¹ King of Hungary, and crowned him forthwith, August 15, 1540.²²

Under the terms of the treaty made in 1538 Ferdinand now demanded the scepter and rule of all Hungary; but John on his death-bed, coveting the crown for his son and disregarding his promise in the treaty, had appointed two crafty counselors²³ guardians of his young son, expressly charging them not to let Hungary be ruled by one who was not his offspring; and he had also recommended Isabella to the interest of the Sultan. The young Queen had undoubted native ability and keen practical judgment, and had been trained in statecraft by her astute but unprincipled mother. Moreover, she was ambitious, and determined to be Queen.²⁴ Martinuzzi encouraged her to keep the kingdom. She

²¹ Named in honor of his father and of his Polish grandfather.

²² Cf. Bethlen, *op. cit.*, 1, 344; Stephanus F. Uzoni, *Unitario-Ecclesiastica Historia Transylvanica*, 2 vols. in Ms, 1, 603. This most important of the manuscript authorities on Unitarian history in Transylvania exists in three copies: (1) one in the library of the Unitarian Gymnasium at Székely-Keresztúr, in three volumes, *ex libris* Elek Jakab; (2) one in the library of the Unitarian College at Kolozsvár, in five volumes, of which the last three contain valuable copies of documents, largely in Hungarian; (3) one in two volumes, belonging to the Bishop's library at Kolozsvár. This last is the author's original Ms, and is dated at the end, 1775. By the extraordinary kindness of the Representative Consistory of the Unitarian Church at Kolozsvár, to whom the author acknowledges his deep obligation, he was permitted to bring this copy with him to America, to use as long as needed in the preparation of the present work. The references are made to this edition.

²³ The monk Frater George Martinuzzi, Bishop of Nagyvárad, who had been his valued adviser during his recent exile in Poland, a man of great ability and resourcefulness; and a kinsman named Peter Petrovics, who later on became an active Calvinist.

²⁴ One must try to strike a fair balance between the unqualified praise of Bethlen, *op. cit.*, 1, 288, cf. 626, and the virulent condemnation of Forgács, who judges her guilty of every sort of folly and immorality. Cf. Franciscus Forgáchius, *Rerum Hungaricarum sui temporis Commentarii* (Posonii, 1788), pp. 208-233.

therefore convened the Diet, and asked their view as to the validity of the unpublished treaty. There was opposition, but the majority took her side and elected the young Prince King of Hungary, and the Queen and his two guardians as regents.

Ferdinand strove to move her to fulfil the treaty, but in vain. He therefore laid siege to Buda where Isabella was staying with her infant son; but before he was able to reduce it the Sultan in the nick of time appeared with a large army, drove the Germans away and occupied the capital which, along with much of lower Hungary, remained henceforth for nearly a century and a half in Turkish possession. The Sultan treated Isabella with great consideration, but he advised her to leave Buda, since she could not hope to hold it against the superior German forces. However, he assured her Transylvania and Hungary east of the Tisza (Theiss) at once, and promised to restore Buda to her son when he should be grown. She therefore withdrew to her own territory, and having been, at the instance of Martinuzzi, invited by the Diet at Torda in June 1542, she took up her residence in the lately deceased Bishop's vacant palace at Gyulafehérvár,²⁵ which remained the residence of the Prince so long as there was one in Transylvania.

Transylvania declared itself independent in 1543, claiming the right to choose its own rulers, which it exercised until its union with the Empire in 1691. While acknowledging the suzerainty and guardianship of Turkey by paying annual tribute, it now formally recognized Isabella as Queen, and John Sigismund in 1544 as King. Meantime the executive functions were shared by a triumvirate of which Martinuzzi, by virtue of his ability and experience and his control of the treasury, soon became the leading member, and practically dictator. Though Isabella held indeed the title of Queen, she had little else. The people were not united in support of her, while Martinuzzi, conscious of his power and ambitious for more, began to disregard her and to rule arbitrarily, treating her and her son almost as his inferior subjects, furnishing them but a niggardly allowance for their support, enrolling soldiers and incurring expense, while seeking in various ways to win favor with the multitude.

²⁵ The various names that this town has borne are apt to confuse the reader. The Latin name long and widely current was Alba Julia; Hungarians called it by the name given above; Germans, by its equivalent, Weissenburg (not to be confounded with Stuhlweissenburg — Székesfehérvár — southwest of Buda). When the fortifications were rebuilt under the Emperor Charles VI, a new set of names was given the city in his honor: Alba Carolina, Károlyfehérvár, and Karlsburg.

Some of the leading men noting all this warned the Queen, and she therefore called on Martinuzzi to render account of his administration of the treasury, to which he insolently replied that the treasury was his responsibility, of which he would render account to no one but the King when he had grown up. The Queen then complained to the Sultan, who gave Martinuzzi warning.

Meantime Ferdinand, increasingly concerned over the continued presence of the Turks in Buda and their dominance over Transylvania, and also aware of the strained relations between Martinuzzi and the Queen, brought about a conference with the former. The ultimate result of this, after protracted manoeuvres on both sides, was that after Isabella had been besieged in her capital by Martinuzzi, and an imposing military force had suddenly appeared from Hungary to demand fulfilment of John's treaty with Ferdinand, and had overawed the Diet then in session, the Queen was forced to yield. It was formally agreed (1551) that she should renounce all claim to Transylvania and to certain parts of Hungary, including the important city of Kassa (Kaschau); that she should surrender to Ferdinand her crown and the other insignia of royalty; that Ferdinand in turn should bestow upon John Sigismund the Duchies of Oppeln and Ratibor in Silesia (which belonged to the Empire) and should restore to him his father's rich patrimony of forty castles in northern Hungary; that he should pay the Queen 100,000 gold ducats; and should betroth his youngest daughter Joanna to John. It had been incidentally agreed with Martinuzzi that for his offices in thus betraying his rulers and their country he should be made Archbishop of Gran, and should later receive a Cardinal's hat.²⁶ A meeting of the Diet was then called at Kolozsvár to confirm the treaty. The Queen and her son, with suitable escort, took their sorrowful way toward Kassa on their way home to Poland. Martinuzzi accompanied them to the border, and as they separated he shed crocodile tears.

It is of interest to remark in passing that one of the exiled Queen's little retinue as she left Transylvania, who remained with her until she was safe in Poland, was Dr. Giorgio Biandrata, whose subsequent career of five years from 1558 to 1563 in promoting Antitrinitarianism in Poland has already been related in the preceding division, and who after a dozen years more was also to play a leading part in the beginnings of

²⁶ The whole story in full detail is found in Bethlen, *op. cit.*, i, 428-489.

Unitarianism in Transylvania Having won a distinguished reputation for his skill in treating diseases of women, he was called from Italy to be court physician to Queen Bona at Kraków, and he came thence to a similar post under Queen Isabella at Gyulafehérvár, where he stayed for eight years, 1544-51. A contemporary letter speaks of him as 'a man of the greatest kindness, and one born for friendship . . . highly esteemed in Venice for his knowledge and skill, whose name was spoken in Italy not only with honor but even with pride'. The same source speaks of Isabella as 'a Queen of rare virtue and integrity and liberality'.²⁷ In the year 1552-53, at the investigation into the murder of Martinuzzi, Biandrata (who had in the meantime accompanied Queen Bona on her return to Italy in 1551) testified that during his eight years at Isabella's court he saw what was going on, and how constantly she was afflicted, persecuted and deceived by Martinuzzi.²⁸ He was at this time still a Roman Catholic, but in the course of the seven years next ensuing he left the Catholic faith, and in Italy and Switzerland reached a position cautiously antitrinitarian, returning to Poland in 1558 as we have seen in the previous division. The mention of Biandrata leads us directly into the religious field with which we are especially concerned; and now that the complex national and political background has been set forth, we must next follow the dramatic development of religion in Transylvania.

²⁷ Cf. *Magyar Torténelmi Emlékek (monumenta Hungariae Historica)* (Budapest, 1860), II, ix, 256 f., letter of Antal Verencz to Gaspar Pecs, Alba Julia, May 29, 1547.

²⁸ Cf. Michael Burian, *Dissertatio historico critica de duplici ingressu in Transilvaniam Georgii Blandratae* (Albo Carolinae, 1806) pp. 10-17. Also Elek Jakab, 'Nehány adat Blandrata György életéről' etc. (Some data on the life of G. B.), *Keresztény Magvető* (The Christian Seedsower), Kolozsvár, xii (1877), 3.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLY REFORMATION IN TRANSYLVANIA 1520-1564

THE EARLIEST BEGINNINGS of Christianity in Hungary (it will be borne in mind that Transylvania did not definitely separate from Hungary until 1556) are lost in the mists of obscurity; but there may be truth in the legend that early missionaries penetrated the country even before Trajan.¹ At all events, the Arian Emperor Valens sent missionaries to Transylvania, and after the Council of Nicaea the country was partly Athanasian and partly Arian.² Under the sway of the Goths, who were Arians in doctrine, their faith spread widely in the third and fourth centuries; and in 351 their Bishop Photinus³ of Sirmium (Mitrovitz) on the Save, at the southern border of the country, was condemned at the synod of Sirmium as a heretic for holding humanitarian views of Christ; and in the same century we read of an Arian Bishop Callicrates at Napoca (Kolozsvár). Yet more famous was the Arian Bishop Ulfilas, who became Arian at Nicaea, translated the New Testament into Gothic, thus becoming the founder of Gothic literature, and did much to spread his faith in Dacia Mediterranea.⁴ Bogumil sects and Photinians also crept in from the lower Danube and found followers in Transylvania. Under the Gothic rule Arianism remained dominant, and after that it was favored by Attila; in fact, despite the strenuous labors of Roman missionaries and rulers during the ninth and tenth centuries to exterminate Arianism,⁵ it continued widespread and had numerous followers until the formal adoption of Catholic Christianity under King Stephen early in the eleventh century. It would, however, be rash to assume and futile to try to prove the

¹ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, I, 15-17.

² Cf. Sandor Székely, *Unitaria vallás története Erdélyben* (History of the Unitarian religion in Transylvania), Kolozsvár, 1839, p. 12.

³ After him, Photinians became a favorite designation of Socinians, especially with German writers, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

⁴ Cf. Andreas Illia, *Ortus et progressus variorum in Dacia gentium ac religionum* (Claudiopoli, 1730), p. 20, Ferencz Kanyaró, *Unitáriusok Magyarországon*, etc. (Unitarians in Hungary), Kolozsvár, 1891, p. 13.

⁵ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, I, 32-42.

existence of any clear historical connection between these remnants of early heresy and the Antitrinitarianism that rapidly arose in Transylvania in the second half of the sixteenth century; though it is credible enough that a certain sediment of the old heresy may still have clouded the popular theology, and have made the new heresy when it appeared seem less strange and more easily acceptable than had the popular doctrine always been purely orthodox.

When the Protestant Reformation arose in Europe, the three free 'nations' (as they later called themselves), the Magyars, Szeklers and Saxons, in Transylvania had been Roman Catholic for more than five hundred years, though the Roman Church and its Inquisition never exercised complete control in free Hungary, even with its bitter persecutions of Waldenses and Hussites. The Hungarians had never paid tithes to either Bishop or Pope, and some of the nobles had become Protestant before 1520 when a royal decree of excommunication and confiscation was issued against heretics; but the King was too much occupied with the approaching invasion of the Turks to enforce it.⁶ The Saxons had always kept up cultural relations with the home-land of their fathers, and in 1520 Luther's books were brought to Transylvania by merchants of Hermannstadt (Szeben) who traded in Germany and found them at the Leipzig fair. They were widely and eagerly read. At the same time two Silesian monks who had heard Luther at Wittenberg came and spread his doctrine, making some important converts.⁷ King Louis expressed his displeasure by forbidding the sale, purchase, reading or discussion of Lutheran books, on pain of confiscation of property; and the Diets in the years immediately following decreed the expulsion of Lutherans from Szeben and the burning of Lutheran books there, and that Lutherans wherever found should be seized and burned. Many books were thus destroyed, but apart from this, edicts and decrees had little effect; and with his defeat at Mohács in 1526 the King's efforts to suppress the heresy fell to the ground.⁸

After King Louis's death the two rival Kings, Ferdinand and John

⁶ Cf. George Boros, 'Sketches from the history of Unitarianism in Hungary,' *The Unitarian* (Ann Arbor, 1886), i, 324.

⁷ Cf. Székely, *op. cit.*, p. 48; Georgius Haner, *Historia ecclesiarum Transylvanicarum* (Francofurti, 1694), p. 147.

⁸ Cf. Székely, *loc. cit.*; Haner, *op. cit.*, p. 162; Franciscus Páriz Pápai, *Rudus redivivum, seu breves rerum ecclesiasticarum Hungaricarum . . . Commentarii* (Cibinii, 1684), reprinted in *Miscellanea Tigurina* (Zürich, 1723), ii, 124-127.

Zápolya, were both Catholics and of course unfriendly to the Reformation. At first both issued severe ordinances against it, and John even had one or two Lutherans put to death,⁹ but the movement had gone too fast and far to be stopped. The clergy at Hermannstadt openly left the Church, and many of the laity followed. The whole city was swept clean in 1529, the other German towns speedily followed, and the Augsburg Confession was adopted by the Saxon Synod in 1544. The Hungarian nobles and the Szeklers also accepted the new teaching, and so many of the Catholic gentry and officials went into voluntary exile in Hungary that the Church had hardly any important followers left. Only eight noble families and three magnates in John's kingdom remained Catholic.¹⁰ During the years 1552-60 some 1,500 students were matriculated at Wittenberg under Lutheran influences; and even before John's death Transylvania had become so generally Protestant that he let it go without opposition.¹¹ The Lutheran churches now organized with a German and a Hungarian section under a single Bishop or General Superintendent. Until 1557 the three 'nations' were united in religion, while the Catholic Bishop fled to Hungary and his property and incomes were confiscated, and for a century and a half Transylvania had no Catholic Bishop.¹²

While religion in Transylvania was undergoing these radical changes, political conditions remained greatly disturbed. After Isabella and her son were sent into exile, Martinuzzi was left in supreme control. He promptly received his promised appointment as Cardinal, but his course was soon run. Ferdinand became convinced that he was standing in the way of the desired peace, and was playing a double rôle, being engaged in some sort of conspiracy with the Sultan. He therefore determined to be rid of him, and before the end of the year Martinuzzi was ruthlessly assassinated by Ferdinand's soldiers.¹³ This act did nothing to increase the Transylvanians' loyalty to their new King, to

⁹ Cf. Francis Balogh, 'History of the Reformed Church of Hungary,' *Reformed Church Review* (Lancaster, 1906), p. 300.

¹⁰ Cf. George Bauhofer, *History of the Protestant Church in Hungary* (Eng. tr., London, 1854), p. 73.

¹¹ Cf. Balogh, *op. cit.*, p. 301, Peter Bod, *Historia Hungarorum Ecclesiastica* (Lugdunum Batavorum, 1888), 1, 179.

¹² Cf. Teutsch, *Geschichte*, 1, 335 f. But from 1553 to 1556 Bishop Bornemissa appointed by Ferdinand had at least a nominal tenure of the see of Alba Julia, cf. Bethlen, *Historia* 1, 550, 600.

¹³ Cf. Bethlen, *op. cit.*, 1, 508-527.

whose sovereignty they had unwillingly yielded. To administer his government he appointed a new Vaivode who however resigned his office the next year, and two others were appointed in his stead. The King sought peace with the Sultan, hoping to have the *status quo* confirmed by him; but the latter insisted that Isabella be first restored to her kingdom, and as the price of peace he ordered the Vaivodes to expel the Germans from Transylvania and reinstate the Queen, threatening to cause an invasion of Tatars and Wallacks if they did not comply. The military commander, General Castaldo, authorized the Vaivodes to make terms with the Sultan, and as Ferdinand was in no position to resist the Sultan's forces, the Diet was convened at the end of 1555, and took measures looking to the return of Isabella and the young Prince.

Meantime, in the four years since her exile, Isabella had been cumbered with a succession of troubles. After leaving Transylvania she had waited many months at Kassa, complaining that the money promised her under the treaty had not been paid by Ferdinand, nor had she been put in possession of the Duchy of Oppeln or the patrimony of her husband as agreed, while Ferdinand put her off with vain promises.¹⁴ She therefore went on to Poland and sought the intervention of her brother the King. After repeated missions sent to Ferdinand in her behalf, the promised duchy was at length delivered to her, and she went thither to reside, only to find that the palace was so badly out of repair as to be unfit for occupancy, and that the income did not permit her and the Prince to live in decent dignity. Returning therefore to Poland, she was obliged to look to Queen Bona and the King for support.¹⁵ However, she continued with the latter to agitate plans for recovering her kingdom; and promoted them with the Sultan with such success that he was led to take the action referred to above.¹⁶

At the Diet above mentioned, Petrovics¹⁷ was appointed Regent until the Queen and the Prince should return. He came with alacrity,

¹⁴ Cf. Bethlen, *op cit*, I, 528 f.

¹⁵ Bethlen, *op cit*, I, 548 f.

¹⁶ For Isabella's life in Poland at this period, cf. Lajos Szadecky, *Isabella és János Zsigmond Lengyelországban, 1552-1556* (I and J S in Poland), Budapest, 1888.

¹⁷ It will be recalled that he was one of the two whom King John on his death-bed had appointed as counselors of the Queen. He was a kinsman of the late King, had accompanied Isabella in her exile, and had meanwhile represented her interests with the Sultan.

renounced the protection of Ferdinand, captured Gyulafehérvár, and then convened a Diet at Kolozsvár where arrangements were made for bringing Isabella back from Poland. Delegates were appointed to go to the Queen at Lwów in Galicia where she was then staying, present their request for her return, and offer her their loyal submission. She and the Prince were escorted to the border by a thousand Polish troops, and there were met by two splendid companies of Turkish troops and picked Wallachian soldiers who escorted them the rest of the way. The whole journey was a triumphal procession, and she entered Kolozsvár on October 22, 1556, five years after her exile, amid demonstrations of the greatest joy. Full royal powers were voted her and the Prince, though she was to exercise the supreme power during the five years until he should become of age.¹⁸

At the end of the year Isabella resumed her residence in the old Bishop's palace at Gyulafehérvár. During her exile the Reformation had continued its rapid growth in Transylvania until at the time of her return Protestants far outnumbered Catholics. King John cannot have been a very devoted Catholic, for he had been under papal discipline for contesting the throne with Ferdinand, and Rome had strongly supported the cause of the House of Hapsburg against him; while Isabella will have been even less attached to the Church after having been plotted against and betrayed by the Bishop Martinuzzi, though so long as she remained in Catholic Poland she must have remained outwardly Catholic. But Petrovics had early in the Reformation been converted by a Protestant preacher, and had been a great patron of the reformed faith in his province of Temesvár;¹⁹ and as soon as he was placed in authority, even before the Queen had returned, he vigorously carried out church reform, lest the Queen returning should take occasion to interfere with the Protestant movement. Thus he cleared the churches of images and the parishes of their priests, melted the sacred vessels and coined them into money, and pressed the priests to adopt the new faith.²⁰ The Diet also took formal measures to the same end. The Papal religion with all its orders and professors was with general approval done away the same year, the church properties and revenues

¹⁸ Cf. Bethlen, *op. cit.*, i, 590-598.

¹⁹ Cf. Friedrich Adolph Lampe, *Historia Ecclesiae Reformatae in Hungaria et Transylvania* (Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1728), p. 98.

²⁰ Cf. Bod, *Historia*, i, 180 f; Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 609.

were confiscated and applied to the support of the Crown, and all church colleges and cloisters but two were converted into state schools.²¹

Within the year Petrovics died at Kolozsvár, full of years and honors, and Isabella was thus deprived of the one who ever since King John's death had been her most faithful friend and counselor, as well as the appointed guardian of the young Prince. Being childless he made Isabella his sole heir. Her reign after her restoration was neither long nor happy; for she had been recalled not so much by the spontaneous desire of her people as under pressure from the Sultan; and it soon became evident that others coveted the power that had been recovered by her. Repeated complaints were therefore made about her partiality to the Poles at her court, though the Diet had at the outset obligingly granted her request that she might bestow offices, honors and public gifts on them equally with the Hungarians. A dangerous conspiracy of ambitious nobles had to be put down. Leading men in the country, feeling that the Prince was being kept too long in leading-strings by his mother, and surrounded by companions not calculated to fit him for kingship, urged a change in his education; but remembering the wiles of Martinuzzi, and suspecting some plot for controlling her son,²² she resisted all suggestions that he be sent away from her watchful care. All this however was soon cut short by the Queen's unexpected death on September 15, 1559, shortly after that of her royal mother.²³ At the time of her death she had all but completed private negotiations for a treaty with Ferdinand, under which the difficulties between them were to be composed, while Transylvania was at once to be given over to her son, though without the royal title, and she herself was to retire from her troubled reign to territories on the border of her native Poland.²⁴ The Diet, however, on hearing the terms of the contemplated treaty, totally disapproved of them, recalled the emissary in charge of it, and appointed a Council of twelve to administer the government for the Prince during the rest of his minority.²⁵ John Sigismund therefore continued to struggle with Ferdinand for Transylvania and the throne; though in 1562 an eight years' truce was concluded between the

²¹ Cf. Bod. *loc. cit.*, Bethlen, *op. cit.*, i, 600; *Approbatæ*, Pars I, tit. i, art. v.

²² Cf. Bethlen, *Historia*, i, 617-620.

²³ For her biography, cf. Endre Veress, *Isabella Királyné* (Queen Isabella), Budapest, 1901.

²⁴ Cf. Bethlen, *op. cit.*, i, 625-628.

²⁵ Cf. Benkő, *Transsilvania*, i, 218.

Emperor and the Sultan, in which the Prince was included, and more peaceful times seemed at hand. Ferdinand, however, died two years later, and hostilities were then renewed by his son and successor Maximilian.

While these rapid changes were taking place in the political field, changes no less radical were occurring in the religious life of Transylvania. The Reformation here was complete when Queen Isabella returned to her throne, and one of her first acts at the Diet of Torda in June 1557 was to issue a decree calculated to promote harmony and quiet doctrinal controversy among her people. It provided that 'every one might hold the faith of his choice, together with the new rites or the former ones, without offence to any . . . and that the adherents of the new religion should do nothing to injure those of the old.'²⁶ It will be noted that this decree was simply a practical measure designed to promote peace between Catholics and Lutherans, and did not declare a policy of general toleration, nor a principle of generous tolerance, in matters of religion; for when it was reaffirmed by the Diet of the following year, it in the same breath forbade the rising sect of Sacramentarians.²⁷ As the proportions then stood between them, it was evidently intended to secure the Catholic minority from further attacks by the Lutherans.

The Reformation in Transylvania was solidly Lutheran until the middle of the century, and Saxons and Hungarians alike held unwaveringly to the Augsburg Confession adopted in 1544; but the unhappy controversy over the Lord's Supper, which had for two decades divided the churches in Germany and Switzerland—whether the sacrament was to be taken corporeally as containing the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, as Luther held, or spiritually as a symbol, as Zwingli and Calvin taught—gradually spread eastward, so that by 1550 many in Hungary proper were embracing Calvinism, and it was threatening Transylvania. Its progress was for a time much disturbed

²⁶ Ut quisque teneret eam fidem quam vellet cum novis et antiquis ceremoniis, permittentes in negotio fidei eorum arbitrio id fieri quod ipsis liberet, citra tamen injuriam quorumlibet, ne novae religionis sectatores veterem professionem lacerarent aut illius sectatoribus fierent quoquo modo injurii. Cf. *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek* (Records of the Transylvanian Diets), ed. Szilágyi Sándor (Budapest, 1876-99), ii, 78.

²⁷ The name at first given to those holding the Zwinglian view of the Lord's Supper. Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, ii, 93, 98. A similar decree had been passed in the Grisons at the Diet of Ilanz in 1526. *v. supra*, vol. I, p. 97 f.

by the persistent activity of Dr. Francesco Stancaro, whose previous and also subsequent career in Poland has been related above.²⁸ After having to leave Königsberg and Germany, he came to Hungary, and was for a time physician at the court of Petrovics,²⁹ while improving the opportunity at the same time to spread his favorite doctrine about the mediation of Christ. In 1553 he disturbed the peace of the ministers at Kolozsvár by insisting on his doctrine, which they vigorously opposed, publishing a confession to the contrary at Wittenberg in 1555. In the next year his doctrine was formally condemned by a synod at Óvár, and he then sought a teaching position, which was refused him. He next sought residence at Hermannstadt, which was finally granted on condition that he refrain from controversy. Expelled from here he returned to Kolozsvár where at the end of 1557 the ministers challenged him to debate, in which the leading part was taken by Francis Dávid, a Lutheran minister who had lately become Rector of the school and one of the pastors of the Hungarian church, who won universal admiration for his learning, eloquence and skill in debate. He was ere long to become the head of the Unitarian movement in Transylvania. Defeated at Kolozsvár, Stancaro sought a footing elsewhere and finally, enraged at the opposition he everywhere met, he even had the audacity to address the Queen, demanding that she and her ministers should put to death as heretics the Kolozsvár pastors who had opposed him. The pastors replied with a dignified Apology,³⁰ after which Stancaro, unable to find further refuge in Transylvania, went back to Poland as we have previously seen, leaving no trace of his influence behind, since with its author gone, as the chronicler relates, his error faded away more quickly than even a shadow.³¹ This episode of Stancaro would hardly have deserved mention here except that it has often been held that it was he that introduced Unitarianism into Transylvania. The contrary is the case. He came as an orthodox Calvinist, opposing the dominant doctrine of the Lutherans, and one of his charges against them was that they were Arians and that they opposed

²⁸ *v. supra*, vol. I, pp. 273-276, 297-301. For the present episode cf. Haner, *Historia*, pp. 222-240; Lampe, *Historia*, pp. 106-116, 684 f; Pápai, *Rudus*, pp. 142-145.

²⁹ Cf. Stephanus Wesszprem, *Succincta Medicorum Hungariae et Transilvaniae Biographia* (Lipsiae, 1774), ii, 187.

³⁰ *Apologia adversus malidicentiam et calumnias Francisci Stancari* (Claudiopoli, 1558).

³¹ Absente autore error ejus etiam umbra citius evanesceret. Haner, *Historia*, p. 246.

the worship of Christ. However the case may have been in Poland, Stancaro's activity had no relation to Antitrinitarianism in Transylvania.³² Nor can any influence upon this movement be ascribed, as in Poland, to the Anabaptists; for although they did somewhat creep into Hungary proper before the middle of the century, they were soon expelled from there, and none of them settled in Transylvania until well in the seventeenth century.

Down to 1557 the Lutheran churches in Transylvania, though they had a Saxon and a Hungarian section under a single Superintendent or Bishop, generally accepted Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper. But in 1556 Martin Kálmáncsehi, pastor at Debreczen, having accepted Calvin's view, began to reform the doctrine of his church. In the following year a largely attended synod at Kolozsvár took notice of the innovation, nicknamed the innovators Sacramentarians, condemned Kálmáncsehi as heretical, adopted a confession on the subject, and voted that all pastors should maintain the Lutheran doctrine. Similar action was taken again at a synod in 1558, and warning was given by the Diet, both at Torda.³³ Controversy on this subject disturbed the peace of the Lutheran churches for seven or eight years, and as a prominent part in it was borne by Francis Dávid, some account of him must now be given.³⁴ Details of his early life are scanty; but he was born at Kolozsvár in 1510, where his father, by trade a shoemaker, was perhaps of Saxon stock,³⁵ and his mother a Hungarian of noble family. He used both languages with equal facility, though after the division of the church all his affiliations were with the Hungarian element. After preliminary studies in the local Franciscan school and at Gyulafehérvár, wealthy patrons sent him abroad in mature life where he

³² Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 113 f.

³³ Cf. Pápai, *Rudus*, p. 145 f; *Magyar Emlékek*, ii, 98: censent etiam novas sectas et religiones evitandas ob id praesertim ut fontes et semina tumultuum evitentur.

³⁴ The standard life, done with scholarly thoroughness, is by Elek Jakab, *Dávid Ferencz Emléke* (Memoirs of F. D.), Budapest, 1879.

³⁵ His father's first name is said to have been Dávid, whence by dropping the father's family name, a not unusual practice, he came to be called in Latin Franciscus Davidis — Francis, Dávid's son. Davidis is thus taken as a patronymic in the genitive case; but it may also be a nominative form (so in the Vulgate), and seems often to be so used. Hungarian usage places the family name first — Dávid Ferencz — though that usage is not followed in the present work. Kolozsvár (*Lat.*, Claudiopolis; *Ger.*, Klausenburg; and under the Romanian occupation, Cluj), though not the capital of Transylvania, was its metropolis, a city famed for its wealth and culture, and it has always been the capital of Transylvanian Unitarianism.

spent some four years (1545-48) at Wittenberg. Returning to Transylvania he was at first Rector of a Catholic school at Bestercze (Bis-tritz), where ere long he accepted the Reformation and became pastor at the neighboring village of Péterfalva. By 1555 he had become Rector of the Lutheran school at Kolozsvár, and having declined urgent calls to become minister of important churches at Hermannstadt and Kassa, he accepted one to remain here as pastor, where he had won acknowledged leadership in controversy with Stancaro, and was in the following year made Superintendent of the Hungarian Lutheran churches, and became champion of the Lutheran view against the encroaching Calvinism. In 1558, in debate at a synod at Torda, he won a decisive victory over Kálmáncsehi, who soon afterward died. At this time he was of course Lutheran.³⁶ Yet despite the action of synods and Diets, the Calvinists continued to press their views upon Lutheran assemblies. Peter Mélius (*Hung.*, Juhász), who had succeeded Kálmáncsehi at Debreczen, now became the champion of Calvinism, attended numerous synods in Transylvania, won great numbers of the Hungarians and Szeklers to his view of the sacrament, and presently Dávid from being his chief opponent became his convert.

Discussion was continued in 1560 in an assembly at Megyes (Mediasch), with the Saxon ministers on one side and Dávid and Kaspar Helt (*Hung.*, Heltai), minister at Kolozsvár, on the other. After prolonged discussion, as the latter persisted in their view, they were by vote excluded from the Saxons and no longer recognized as brethren. The young King had now come to his throne and was taking keen interest in religious questions, but was averse to doctrinal wrangles as being a source of disorders among his people. Hoping to put an end to the matter, he therefore ordered a formal disputation to be held, and by decree of the Diet a synod accordingly met early in 1561, again at Megyes. A heated debate continued for several days, but Dávid and his party did not yield, and the Saxons too remained unshaken. As no agreement could be reached, the King ordered a report of the debate, with the writings of both parties, submitted to the leading German universities for their judgment.³⁷ To prevent further controversy therefore the Diet at Torda in 1563 renewed and confirmed the

³⁶ He set forth his view in print in *Defensio orthodoxae Sententiae de Coena Domini* (Claudiopoli, 1559).

³⁷ Cf. Pápai, *Rudus*, p. 147; Benkő, *Transsilvania*, ii, 128 f.

decree of 1557, 'that every one may freely embrace the religion and faith that he has preferred, and may support preachers of his own religion,' and that neither party shall disturb the other's worship, or do harm or inflict injury upon the other.³⁸

Meanwhile the schism kept spreading, and won many converts among Hungarians and Szeklers, and not a few even among the Saxons.³⁹ Despite all, contentions still persisted; so that the leading men of the Kingdom persuaded the King to settle these matters permanently if possible at a general synod called in the interest of religious peace. It was the last attempt. In a recent serious illness the King had summoned to come from Poland his mother's old physician, Dr. Giorgio Biandrata, who seems at once by his medical skill, his courtly manners, his experience at court, his wide religious knowledge and his winning personality to have won the King's full confidence. He therefore committed the management of the difficult matter to him. At a Diet at Segesvár (Schassburg) early in 1564 it was decided that a special synod be held at Enyed, a city not far distant from Gyulafehérvár, and to this he sent Biandrata as his personal representative with full authority, commending him as an eminent and learned man, uncommonly conversant with the Scriptures, who would attend their conferences and try his utmost to restrain their quarrels and reconcile their differences, for the sake of peace and harmony; but if that proved not possible, it should be arranged for the Saxons to have one Superintendent, and for the other party have their own.⁴⁰ The King requested that each side should present its case in writing, as less likely to be exasperating; but Dávid's hopes that the parties might thus be harmonized and the church be held together as one, were disappointed. Neither side would yield or compromise its view. The Calvinists and the Lutherans divided, and henceforth there were two separate churches.⁴¹ The Saxons continued under their old Superintendent,

³⁸ Ut quisque eam quam maluerit religionem et fidem amplecti et concionatores suae religionis libere alere possit, etc Cf *Magyar Emlekek*, II, 218, also 223. A different version is given by Pápai, *op. cit.*, p. 152, Benko, *op. cit.*, II, 129, Bod, *Historia*, I, 412. This again is not a decree of general toleration in religion, but merely a guarantee for the religions immediately concerned.

³⁹ Cf Haner, *Historia*, p. 269; Lampe, *Historia*, p. 122.

⁴⁰ Cf Pápai, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-154; Haner, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-277; Lampe, *op. cit.*, p. 123 f.

⁴¹ Biandrata's management of the difficult proceedings was evidently satisfactory to the King, who seems at this time to have recognized his services by presenting him with

Matthias Hebler; and the Hungarians, or the Reformed Church as they presently came to be known, went on under a separate administration of which their old Superintendent Francis Dávid was now duly recognized as Superintendent.⁴² From now on the Lutherans disappear from our history, which will develop its next brief stage in the Reformed camp. There had thus far been no contention over the doctrine of the Trinity.

three villages, formerly belonging to the cathedral chapter at Gyulafehérvár. Biandrata sold them in 1573 to Christopher Báthory for 6,000 florins. Cf. Burian, *Dissertatio*, p. 85 ff.

⁴² Cf. Bod, *Historia*, i, 308; Lampe, *op. cit.*, p. 685; Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 230.

CHAPTER III

THE RISE OF UNITARIANISM IN TRANSYLVANIA, 1564-1569

CONTROVERSY OVER DOCTRINAL MATTERS in Transylvania as thus far traced has been only in the Lutheran Church; but controversy did not come to an end with the question about the Lord's Supper, nor with the division of the church. Separation from the Lutherans had hardly taken place when discussion of a more serious problem began to claim the attention of the Calvinists. The doctrine now involved in dispute was no less than that of the Trinity; and the one to bring it forward was none other than the new court physician. When Dr. Biandrata came the second time from Poland to Transylvania it was simply as medical adviser to the King, who was at the point of death.¹ Nothing was known of his entertaining dangerous heresy; and there is no good ground for presuming, as the orthodox presently did and charged, that he came with the secret plan to carry out here the system of doctrinal reform that he had been compelled to leave unfinished in Poland. Nevertheless he must have remained at heart deeply interested in the idea of a thoroughly reformed Protestant theology. He found in the young King one who, perhaps through the instructions of his trusted guardian Petkovics, had already broken with whatever Catholic faith he may once have had, but was still deeply interested in religious questions and hospitably inclined toward inquiry into them. From his office he was bound to enjoy intimate acquaintance with the King, and soon won his entire confidence as one that had no political axes to grind. He was therefore early sent on a special confidential mission to the Emperor Ferdinand,² and accompanied the King when he went in 1566 on a critical visit to the Sultan, who showed him especial courtesy. His appointment as the King's personal deputy at the synod at Enyed indicates that the King was already relying on him

¹ Cf. Giovanandrea Gromo, 'Uebersicht des Königs Johann von Siebenburgen Reiches etc., *Archiv für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*, N. F. II (Kronstadt, 1855),

² Cf. Burian, *Dissertatio*, p. 212, Jakab, *Adat*, p. 10

for religious counsel. Not wishing prematurely to invite trouble, Biandrata moved with caution; but within the year after his arrival he discovered in Francis Dávid, leader of the Calvinistic party in the synod at Enyed, a man whose ability in debate marked him as one that might be brought to take the lead in the further reformation of doctrine as Gregory Paulus had recently done in Poland.³

Dávid was a man of outstanding abilities, fortified by ample scholarship; an eloquent and persuasive preacher or debater, equally in German, Hungarian or Latin, whose fervent oratory easily swayed the multitude. While indefatigable and persistent in following a course once chosen of whose final triumph he felt assured, ambitious to exercise leadership, self-confident and even headstrong in action, he was yet by temperament open-minded, and ever ready to abandon an old position in favor of a new one that seemed less open to attack. This won him the reputation among his opponents of being wavering and unstable;⁴ but he was not that, for rapid as his changes were they were those of progress in one consistent direction. In making them he was bold and fearless, and never stopped or delayed for fear of consequences. This trait in the end contributed to his undoing, when his followers were unable or unprepared to move so fast and far as he.⁵

Even before Biandrata arrived upon the scene, the inquiring mind of Dávid had been attracted to the doctrine that was soon to concern them both. Servetus and Erasmus had doubtless been for some time secretly read in Hungary, and it is said that as early as 1560, while still in his active Lutheran days, Dávid had set forth objections to the doctrine of the Trinity.⁶ In the dedication to his early work on the true under-

³ *v. supra*, vol. i, 317-319.

⁴ *Homo inconstantissimus, et quovis vobiliior vertumno*; Bod, *Historia*, i, 308.

⁵ For a characterization from an unsympathetic source, see the letter of Stephen Szántó, S. J., to his superior, Claudius Aquaviva, dated Kolozsvár, Sept. 1, 1581, two years after Dávid's death. 'Francis Dávid was a man of very acute mind and tenacious memory, so familiar with Scripture that he seemed to have the Old and New Testaments at his tongue's end. In disputes with Calvinists and Lutherans before the leading men of the kingdom he easily surpassed them all. It was his custom to explain Scripture by Scripture, and when a passage was cited against his heresy, he would at once bring forward other similar ones which seemed to support his view, and from these he gathered that the authority cited by his opponent was also to be understood in the same way.' *Epistolae et Acta Jesuitarum in Transylvania*, ed. Andreas Veress (Kolozsvár, 1911), i, 185 f.; cf. also a Lutheran view cited by Burian, *Dissertatio*, p. 236 f.

⁶ Cf. F. Dávid, *Első része az szent írásnak*, etc. (First part of the Holy Scripture . . . preaching about God the Father) Gyula-Fejérvár, 1569, in the fifth sermon on II. Cor. xi; cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 126.

standing of the word of God,⁷ he says of himself that he was aroused by God himself through his Scriptures, and that the beginning of the Unitarian religion in Transylvania was due to Him.⁸ Biandrata therefore found in the mind of Dávid fertile soil, and doubtless lost no time in planting seed in it. His own share in the propagation of Unitarian belief in Transylvania has probably been overestimated; but while Dávid's was undoubtedly the effective driving force that carried the ensuing controversy through to a successful conclusion, it is evident that Biandrata from his position of influence with the King and at court was the one that first instigated it and gave it the support and guidance necessary at the beginning.

During 1565, while Biandrata was doubtless comparing notes with Dávid as to the best method of promoting the reformed religion, Dávid's own thought was ripening, and he began from his Kolozsvár pulpit, cautiously at first, to express himself on doctrines not yet settled in the Reformed churches.⁹ For it must be remembered that the Reformed party, while they had abandoned the Catholic teaching and also had lately withdrawn their adherence to that of Luther, had as yet adopted no doctrinal standard of their own.¹⁰ The way was therefore open to make any desirable revision in traditional doctrines before the Reformed churches adopted their own confession. Of the dogmas that Protestantism had taken over from the Catholic Church, the ones that had offered the most frequent stumbling-blocks to inquiring minds, and had occasioned the most serious heresies, were those of the Trinity and the deity of Christ; and it would fall to Dávid as Superintendent to be deeply concerned in any move for reforming or restating them. Meanwhile Biandrata had persuaded the King to transfer his court preacher Alesius to another post, and to appoint Dávid in his stead, where he might exert with King and court the greater influence in favor of reform.

On the other hand Mélius, probably warned by letters from those in Switzerland who had kept eye on Biandrata's movements, cautioned

⁷ *Rövid útmutatás*, etc. (Albae Juliae, 1567).

⁸ Cf. Uzoni, *op. cit.*, i, 128.

⁹ It is said that at the Diet of Segesvár in the preceding year he spoke openly against the Trinity in the King's presence, whereat the King only smiled. Cf. Jakab, *Dávid*, p. 54.

¹⁰ This statement refers of course only to the Reformed churches in Hungarian lands, where it was not until 1567 that the churches in eastern Hungary adopted the Helvetic Confession at Debreczen.

the King against keeping at his court an abandoned heretic who had been driven out by the Swiss reformers.¹¹ Watchful ears therefore detected the gradual change in the tone of Dávid's preaching; and matters came to a head in the same year when he, in listening to the teaching of Peter Károli, Rector of the Kolozsvár school, noted that he was explaining the doctrine of the Trinity in the traditional way, and corrected him. Károli resented the interference and, now confirmed in his previous suspicion of Dávid's orthodoxy, he reported the incident to Mélius, Reformed Superintendent at Debreczen, the centre of Calvinism in eastern Hungary. In order to stem the rising heresy, the two now began an open attack upon Biandrata and Dávid.¹² Mélius had good cause to fear the new heresy, for it had already crept into eastern Hungary from abroad, and had caused him serious trouble five years before. One Thomas Aran of Korospeterd had about 1558 written a book denying the Trinity, and in 1561 he began to preach his doctrine openly at Debreczen. In a five day public debate before a great congregation he pressed Mélius hard, though finally forced to confess defeat and sign a recantation.¹³ He afterwards became active among the Unitarians in Transylvania.

Interest in the question of doctrine had now become so wide and deep that a public discussion was called for. In the era of the Reformation public debates of important questions were as popular as tournaments and jousts had formerly been; and no subjects made a more lively appeal than those of religion. Debates were carefully planned, theses to be defended were published in advance, officers from both sides were chosen to preside, champions confronted each other often for days at a time, and the auditors pronounced their verdict, which though it might settle nothing was taken as a measure of approval or disap-

¹¹ Cf. Haner *Historia*, p. 279 f., Bod *Historia* 1. 399.

¹² Cf. Lampe *Historia*, pp. 152-158. Károli soon left his post at Kolozsvár and became Rector of the Reformed school at Debreczen, where he later succeeded Mélius as Superintendent upon the death of the latter in 1572. He afterwards published an attack on Biandrata and David, which was in turn answered by Sommer, his successor in the school at Kolozsvár. Cf. Petrus Carolinus, *Brevis Explicatio orthodoxae fidei de uno Deo et Spiritu Sancto adversus blasphemias G. Blandratae et F. Davidis errores* (Wittenbergae, 1571), Joannes Sommerus, *Refutatio scripti Petri Caroli* etc. (Ingolstadt-Kolozsvár, 1582).

¹³ Mélius published against him his *Az Aran Tamas hamis és eretnek tévelgésnec*, etc. (The false and heretical error of T. A.) Debreczen, 1562, which gives Aran's theses in full. Cf. Boros, *Sketches*, p. 324, Kanyaro, *Unitariussok*, pp. 56-60.

proval. Dávid, therefore, as Superintendent, with the assent of the King, ordered a disputation and called a synod to meet at Torda (later for general convenience changed to Gyulafehérvár), February 24, 1566, to discuss the Trinity and related doctrines.¹⁴ This was the first public discussion of the question in Transylvania, and the beginning of the bitter Unitarian controversy. The discussion was very heated, and many questions were aroused to be settled later.¹⁵ Biandrata and Dávid here set forth several propositions bearing on the questions in dispute, and left them for the ministers to reflect upon for some weeks until May 19, when Dávid called a general synod of all the Hungarian ministers at Maros-Vásárhely.¹⁶ In the intervening period two preliminary meetings were held. In a provincial synod at Torda on March 15, some of the ministers, led by Biandrata and Dávid, presented a brief confession about the Trinity, giving a simple scriptural statement as to Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but disowning the scholastic terms associated with it; while Biandrata offered seven propositions putting the given doctrines both positively and negatively, in contrasted theses and antitheses. In another synod at Gyulafehérvár on April 25 in the presence of the King, these were offered for the judgment of the ministers that had come from Hungary. The latter offered their criticisms (*limitationes*) on the propositions. Finally, at a synod at Maros-Vásárhely on May 19, a *Consensus* was adopted in the name of the Hungarian pastors in Transylvania. The essential documents were with the approval of the King then published for general circulation.¹⁷

It appears from reading the proceedings in this protracted debate that on both sides there was a sincere effort to arrive at a statement of the doctrine about God that would be acceptable to both parties, and to avoid a further schism if it were in good conscience possible. Biandrata in his *Theses* largely accommodated himself to the traditional expressions of the creeds, and in his *Antitheses* he avoided offensive language,

¹⁴ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia* 1, 232.

¹⁵ Cf. the published report, *Disputatio prima Albana* (Claudiopoli 1566). This discussion, in which Melius is said to have been considered victor, has often been confused with the much more important one two years later issuing in Dávid's triumphal acclamation at Kolozsvár.

¹⁶ Cf. Uzoni, *op. cit.*, 8, 232.

¹⁷ *Catechismus Ecclesiarum Dei in natione Hungarica per Transylvaniam*, etc. (Claudiopoli, 1566), including also the *Sententia concors Pastorum*, etc. The several items mentioned above are given at length in Lampe, *Historia*, pp. 147-162, and differently arranged and with a somewhat different text in Bod, *Historia*, 1, 399-405.

calling his opponents nothing worse than Sophists. The pastors from Hungary on their part approved or conceded nearly all that Biandrata proposed; that is, agreed with him as far as he went. If they would have preferred to go further, and to retain the doctrinal terms that they now avoided, they did not betray the fact. Whether Biandrata on the other hand had not yet thought his position out completely, and was simply practicing a politic reserve until he might be surer of the next move, may perhaps be debated. At all events the questions at issue had been only postponed, but by no means settled, as no one knew better than Mélius. All these proceedings were of course in the bosom of the Reformed Churches of Transylvania, over which Dávid still presided as Superintendent; and the separation of those inclined to Unitarian views was yet in the future.

During this same period Mélius, who had been concerned with developments in Transylvania only as a deeply interested neighbor from an adjoining district, was bending all his energies to keep the rising heresy from spreading in his own district, which comprised the counties in Upper Hungary lying between the Tisza and Transylvania. Antitrinitarian views had begun to spread widely in these counties, and it is said that they would have prevailed but for the opposition of the landed proprietors.¹⁸ At just this time the mischief seemed to center in a pastor named Lukas Égri, or Agriensis (i.e., of Égér, or Erlau). He was a native of the town whose name he bore, had studied at Wittenberg, and had early known Dávid at Kolozsvár, but had returned to Égér on account of the climate. By 1566 he had come to be regarded as the leader of those that were unsound as to the deity of Christ, and was put on his defence at a synod at Göncz in January, 1566, where he presented a statement of his faith. On its face it seems straightforward and orthodox; but his suspicious judges found it ambiguous and deceitful on nearly every point. No action was taken, but early the next year Mélius got the synod at Debreczen to subscribe the new Helvetic Confession as a bar to heresy; and resolutions defending the orthodox doctrine of God and condemning the new heresies were considered both there and a year later at a synod at Szikszó. Meanwhile a petition in the name of the church was presented to General Lazarus Schwendi, commander of Maximilian's armies and a Lutheran, asking that he attend the next synod and use his authority against any in Hungary

¹⁸ Cf. Kanyaró, *Unitáriusok*, p. 61.

found infected with Arianism, especially Lukás Ęgrı. The synod was called by authority of the General at Kassa in January, 1568. Ęgrı presented his statement of faith in twenty seven articles, which the ministers answered and condemned article by article, and they then adopted and subscribed an orthodox confession; whereupon Ęgrı was found guilty of heresy, and by authority of the General was imprisoned at Kassa for more than five years. Argument in this form at length proved convincing, for in 1570 Ęgrı subscribed an undeniably orthodox confession of faith. Nothing further is recorded of him.¹⁹

Though the debates at the four synods in 1566 had been warm, the *Consensus* adopted was inconclusive, for it left too many terms undefined. While designed if possible to be acceptable to both parties in the church it fell short of satisfying either; and although the orthodox claimed that they had won the victory, Mélius was eager for further discussion and petitioned the King to appoint one Biandrata however felt the need for further ground work and secured a postponement. While Mélius therefore, as just related, was occupied in strengthening the defences of orthodoxy in the neighboring counties of Upper Hungary, Biandrata and Dávid were actively preparing the ground for further advance in Transylvania. The chief means used were the press with which the King had provided them, and which they employed to lay their views before a larger public for thoughtful consideration. The first book to be published was one on *The False and True Knowledge of God*, a solid volume of 188 leaves.²⁰ While the work is ostensibly the joint product of several, the responsible editors were evidently Biandrata and Dávid.²¹ It consists of two books, in twenty four chapters, the first book on the false and the second on the true knowledge of God, and these are presented only as skirmishes preliminary to what may

¹⁹ The documents in Ęgrı's case are given at length by Lampe *Historia* pp. 139-146, 164-217 cf. 219-222 also Kanyaro *Unitariussok* pp. 61-64.

²⁰ *De falsa et vera unitis Dei Patris Filii et Spiritus Sancti cognitione libri duo* Authoribus Ministris Ecclesiarum consentientium in Sirmatia et Transylvania (Albae Juliae 1567). The mention of Polish ministers is significant, showing that Biandrata was in active communication with the Polish Brethren. Witness also Biandrata's letter to the Polish churches, Jan. 27, 1568 in Stanislaus Lubieniecius, *Historia Reformationis Polonicae* (Freistadii, 1685), p. 229 f.

²¹ It seems a fair conjecture that the first or critical part was largely the work of Biandrata. The second or constructive part may well have been compiled from the work of various authors. The eleventh chapter, *Brevis explicatio in primum Ioannis caput*, has lately been identified by Cantimori with Laelius Socinus's *Paraphrasis in Initium Evangelii S. Johannis*. Cf. *Enciclopedia Italiana*, xxxi (1936), 1015.

follow. Both the negative and the positive parts of the work are seriously argued, and on the whole in good spirit; first pointing out unsparingly the objections to the doctrine of the Trinity, and then setting forth what the writers regard as the true scriptural doctrine of God and Christ when the texts are rightly understood. In many places the influence of Servetus is unmistakable.

What the effect of the work as a whole may have been is not clear; but there was one chapter that produced a tremendous sensation and a profound shock. It presented with suitable comments eight pictures designed to give visible representations of the Trinity.²² The orthodox at once took these as 'dreadful and abominable pictures,' intended to show that 'the Trinity is not unlike the fabled three-headed Cerberus, or the many-headed Hydra, more monstrous than the Gorgon,'²³ and thus to hold the doctrine up to ridicule. It is true that the editors entitled this chapter *De horrendis simulachris Deum Trinum et Unum adumbrantibus*; but the fact was that instead of having been invented in profane mockery by the authors they were all taken from unexceptionable orthodox sources, chiefly paintings or sculptures in existing churches, through which artists had done their best to make the holy mystery intelligible to common folk. Mélius and his party were unwilling to endorse these pictures as fair representations of the Trinity in which they believed, and were scandalised beyond measure to have their central dogma thus made a popular laughing-stock, and were quick to hurl back charges of irreverent blasphemy and mockery of the Christian religion.²⁴

²² The pictures were as follows: 1. A three-faced figure on an altar, with the inscription, '*Janus bifrons* was expelled from Rome, in order to set up a *Trifrons* over the world.' 2. Showing a two-headed God on an altar and the Holy Spirit descending in a halo of light (original in a chapel at Kraków). 3. Showing Father, Son and Holy Spirit being transubstantiated into the Host at the sacrament (from a tapestry at Rome). 4. Showing the three persons sitting side by side at table. 5. Showing the flesh of Christ actually descending from heaven. 6. Showing the Father seated, holding the crucified Christ, and above a dove. 7. Symbolically showing Stancaro's conception of the Son mediating between the whole Trinity and men. 8. Representing the Trinity by a single ring adorned with three identical gems.

²³ Cf. Haner, *Historia*, p. 281 f; Benkő, *Transsilvania*, ii, 132 f.

²⁴ These pictures continued to scandalize the Trinitarians so much that when the government changed, every effort was made to have all copies destroyed that could be found, and unmutilated copies are extremely rare. The author has a photostatic copy of the book, and the pictures are well reproduced in Konrad Górski, *Grzegorz Paweł Z Brzezina* (Kraków, 1931), pp. 202-207. For further similar illustrations, see J. R. Beard, *Historical and artistic illustrations of the Trinity* (London, 1846).

At length toward the end of the year Mélius, disturbed at the rapid spread of the heresy, and without waiting longer for a general synod to be called, issued to the ministers in Hungary a call for a synod to be held at Debreczen February 2, 1568, to take action against the heresies of Sabellius, Arius, Paul of Samosata, Photinus and their like. He claimed that their adversaries in Transylvania had already been confuted in the synods of the past year, and he now challenged them to appear or else be proclaimed as defeated.²⁵ Biandrata however suspected a plot to seize and imprison his party as heretics, once they were found in foreign territory, as had lately been the case with Egri, and he did not accept the challenge.²⁶ Early in the next year, however, the King appointed a general synod to be held at Torda, though for greater convenience the place was later changed to Gyulafehérvár, March 3, 1568. The ministers of the Hungarian churches in Transylvania defending the Unity of God invited the Trinitarian ministers of Upper and Lower Hungary (including the Lutheran Saxons) to assist at a disputation between Dávid, Biandrata and their followers and the Trinitarian ministers. Seventeen theses were proposed for discussion, which offered various objections to the doctrine of the Trinity. The King, now deeply interested in questions of religion, greatly enjoyed disputations and sometimes took part in them, firmly believing that sober argument was the best way to bring out the truth on points as to which there was disagreement. The disputation was held in the great hall of the palace in the presence of him and all his court, and it lasted ten days, beginning at five o'clock in the morning. It was the greatest debate in the entire history of Unitarianism. The cardinal points of the whole controversy, to which all others were subordinate, was whether the doctrines of the Trinity and the eternal deity of Christ were taught in the Scriptures.

²⁵ Cf. Lampe *Historia* pp. 176-178, Bod *Historia* i. 405-407.

²⁶ Debreczen lay beyond King John's dominion. Cf. Biandrata's letter of the same month given in Lubieniecius, *l. c. supra*; also David's *Litterae convocatoriae* (Albae Juliae, 1568) convoking the synod next to be spoken of.

²⁷ The sources are given in two reports: one, subscribed by the Elders and Ministers of the (Unitarian) churches in Transylvania, entitled *Brevis enarratio disputationis Albanae* etc. (Albae Juliae, 1568); the other by Caspar Heltai, one of the judges on the Trinitarian side, entitled *Disputatio in causa sacrosanctae Trinitatis* etc. (Claudiopoli, 1568). The accounts agree in the main, but vary considerably in details, being influenced in choice and presentation of materials by the reporters' sympathies. Two years later Heltai reprinted his text without change, but with a new preface in which he confessed his conversion to the views that he had formerly opposed, and acknowledged his especial

The atmosphere was tense with excitement, and feelings ran high; but after some days of prolonged haggling, betraying mutual suspicion and distrust, conditions of the debate were agreed upon which were designed to ensure that speakers should be held to the point, and should refrain from abusive language, and that accurate records should be made. Judges were appointed, an equal number from each side. Dávid, Biandrata and three of the leading ministers on the one side were opposed by Mélius, Károli and four other ministers on the other.²⁸ Speakers from the two sides spoke alternately, and the debate was carried on in the traditional way in as good order as could be expected at the time and in the circumstances, though sometimes interrupted by heckling questions or outbursts of angry temper. The argument centred mostly on the interpretation of the relevant Scripture texts, with little reference to the Creeds or the Fathers. Biandrata at first took an active part, but later showed himself poorly equipped for discussing doctrinal subtleties with trained theologians; and confessing that he was not a theologian but a physician he retired into the background, leaving the main part to Dávid. By the ninth day many of the orthodox brethren were tired of the tedious debate, or had lost heart in it when it seemed to make no progress, and began to leave for home. The two Trinitarian Superintendents also asked leave to go. The King did not grant this, but at the end of the tenth day he adjourned the disputation. He gave no judgment, but took the case under consideration until in the course of time learned men should pronounce fuller and clearer opinions on so intricate a subject.²⁹ Meantime both sides were strictly charged, under severe penalty, not to abuse or quarrel with each other orally or in writing, and were recommended to be instant in prayer. The orthodox historian sums up the whole episode in the often quoted laconic statement that 'the disputation began with heat, lasted not too temperately for ten days, and closed without any profit accruing to the church of Christ.'³⁰

obligation to Biandrata and Dávid for enlightening him. For detailed accounts, besides the two reports cited, cf. Pápai, *Rudus*, p. 155 f; Haner, *Historia*, pp. 282-287; Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 133-141; Bod, *Historia*, i, 409-412.

²⁸ It is significant that only one speaker on the orthodox side was a Transylvanian; the others being either from the Hungarian counties or else Lutherans. Evidently the Calvinists in Transylvania had almost entirely followed Dávid.

²⁹ Cf. Haner, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

³⁰ Disputationem cum fervore orsi, decem dies non modestius continuarunt, et sine omni, qui in Ecclesiam Christi redundaret, fructu, clausurunt. Cf. Pápai, *Rudus*, p. 156.

The year had begun auspiciously for the liberal party, for even before the disputation just mentioned the Diet at Torda in January renewed the decree of toleration passed in 1557 and confirmed in 1563, declaring that 'in every place the preachers shall preach and explain the gospel each according to his understanding of it, and if the congregation like it, well; if not, no one shall compel them, but they shall keep the preachers whose doctrine they approve. Therefore none of the Superintendents or others shall annoy or abuse the preachers on account of their religion, according to the previous constitutions, or allow any to be imprisoned or be punished by removal from his post on account of his teaching, for *faith is the gift of God*,³¹ this comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God.'³² This decree practically legalized Unitarianism in Transylvania. Despite the contrary claim of Mélius and his friends, the disputation at Gyulafehérvár was generally regarded as a signal victory for Dávid and his followers. The news of it reached Kolozsvár before him, and on his return thither a great throng of his people were awaiting him where the Torda road enters the town, and hailed the victor with loud acclamations. The tradition is that he thereupon mounted a large boulder at the street corner and proclaimed the simple unity of God to them with such persuasive eloquence that they took him on their shoulders and bore him to the great church in the square to continue the theme, and that the whole city accepted the Unitarian faith then and there.³³ Good use was made of the next few months to introduce the new teaching to a wider public through print. Apart from four important books of Dávid published in the preceding year, five brief ones in Latin and one in Hungarian appeared in 1568,³⁴

³¹ That faith is the gift of God, as St. Paul declared (Eph. ii, 8) had been a commonplace in Catholic theology, and was often emphasized by the reformers. The decree here gives it a new application by contrast with the policy of imposing faith (in the sense of belief) by force under penalty. The King repeats the saying at the next disputation at Várad (see below).

³² Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, ii, 267, 343. The edict is said to have passed the Diet unanimously. It is the moment of the climax of Dávid's speech in favor of this measure that is represented in the painting by Aladar Körösfői-Kriesch which hangs in the town hall at Torda, and in photogravure has an honored place in multitudes of Unitarian homes in Transylvania. Cf. William C. Gannett, *Francis David* (London, 1914).

³³ Cf. Jakab, *Dávid*, p. 128. The boulder is preserved as a sacred relic and stands, suitably inscribed, in the vestibule of the Unitarian church at Kolozsvár.

³⁴ The most important was *De Mediatoris Jesu Christi Divinitate*; including a reprint of a chapter on the restoration of the Church, from *De operibus Dei* of Cellarius of Basel. Cf. *supra*, vol. i, p. 24. Details of these in Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 504 f; Károly Szabó, *Régi Magyar Könyvtár* (Early Hungarian Bibliography), Budapest, 1879, i, ii.

and two in Hungarian by his colleague Stephen Basilius, minister of the Saxon Unitarian church at Kolozsvár. All these are more or less apologetic, in view of steady attacks by Mélius and his followers, which were not only full of misrepresentation of the views of the 'innovators' as they were called, but also were extremely vituperative and sanguinary, since the death penalty for heretics was repeatedly hinted at or even urged.

Biandrata and Dávid were not satisfied to have their cause rest with the victory won at Gyulafehérvár. They and their followers were suffering too much abuse from the slanders of their adversaries, ministers sympathizing with them were being persecuted or deprived of their positions unless they would violate their consciences, and many earnest souls were unsettled in their faith for want of being sufficiently enlightened. A contemporary chronicle records that at this period all Transylvania was in confusion of mind about religion, and that the common people, attracted now by one argument and now by another, knew not what to believe.³⁵ It was proposed therefore to carry the campaign into the enemy's territory, and to have a disputation conducted in Hungarian, which the common people might understand, since the previous ones had been in Latin, hence intelligible only to the well educated. The King granted the desired authority, and a call was therefore issued to the ministers of the Reformed churches in Hungary to meet on October 10, 1569 (the date was by request of Mélius deferred for ten days more), at Várad,³⁶ to debate a series of propositions on subjects in controversy. The Reformed ministers in the Hungarian counties were not subject to Dávid's authority, since they had their own Superintendent in Mélius of Debreczen; but, though they were not too well pleased with the proposal and demurred, they accepted it. There was a wide-spread rumor that at the meeting at Várad there was to be a general and final action on the questions at issue,³⁷ and the orthodox party in the church would have been glad to have it held

³⁵ Sebastyen Borsos, *Krónika*, in *Erdélyi Történelmi Adatok* (Data for Transylvanian history), ed. Imre Mikó (Kolozsvár, 1855), i, 27.

³⁶ Later known as Nagyvárad (Grosswardein). It was one of the most important cities in the King's dominions, though situated in one of the Hungarian counties outside of Transylvania proper. The call, together with the propositions for discussion and the opponents' arguments, etc., are given at length in Lampe, *Historia*, pp. 224-263, and in Bod, *Historia*, i, 413-424.

³⁷ Cf. Lampe, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

as a Synod with ecclesiastical authority; but the King, seeing that the question lay between two different bodies among his people, chose to have it held subject to his own supervision, under his chosen policy of free and tolerant discussion as the best means of reaching the truth. As it was to be a great national debate, it was attended by the King and all his court, the military heroes of his armies, and other magnates, as well as by Dávid, Mélius, and ministers from both sides of the Tisza. The King acted as judge, and the presiding officer was Gáspár Békés, High Chamberlain and chief counselor of the King.

The chief disputants were Dávid as Superintendent and court preacher, Heltai (who since the last disputation had come over to his side) and Basilius, both preachers at Kolozsvár, and three others. Biandrata, since he did not speak Hungarian, took no part. Opposing them were Mélius as minister at Debreczen and Superintendent of the Hungarian Reformed churches, Károli preacher at Várad, and five others. The debate lasted six full days, and was restricted to these four points: Who is the one God? Who is the only-begotten Son of God the Father? Of the Holy Spirit; Of the divinity of Christ. The debate proceeded on the whole decently enough, though marred by inevitable outbursts of feeling; but Békés had several times to call Mélius to order, and on the third day, when the latter had burst out in personal invective against Dávid, the King sharply reproved him. Again two days later when Mélius seemed merely to befog the issue with sophistry, the King declared, 'Inasmuch as we know that *faith is the gift of God*, and that conscience can not be forced, if one can not comply with these conditions, let him go beyond the Tisza' i.e., leave this country and go to Hungary. Dávid then made a powerful speech in defence of his own side and of liberty of conscience, and made the usual arguments against the Trinity and the dual nature of Christ as unscriptural and unreasonable. When the debate was concluded the King made a closing address, giving reasons why it had been ordered, and expressing regret that it had not accomplished its purpose. In giving judgment he ordered that the Unitarians be not interfered with; and Mélius was charged not to play the Pope, nor remove ministers or burn their books, nor force any one to accept his creed, 'since we demand that in our dominions there shall be freedom of conscience.'³⁸ Thus ended the last important

³⁸ Cf. the official report (reprinted, Kolozsvár, 1870, ed. Nagy and Simén), *A Nagyváradí Disputatio*. For further accounts, cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, I, 141-143; Jakab, *Dávid*,

debate between the two parties in the Reformed Church in Transylvania.³⁹ Henceforth they drew more and more apart. Any later debates were only of local interest.⁴⁰

After the disputation at Várád, as the Unitarian cause had evidently won the field in Transylvania, the fires of controversy died down, and the death of both King John and Mélius within a year or two decidedly changed the face of affairs. In addition to the works already mentioned, Dávid therefore published only one more of importance.⁴¹ In 1569, whether before or after Várád does not appear, there came from the press at Alba Julia a dual work, in two books, entitled respectively *De Regno Christi*, and *De Regno Antichristi*, each followed by a tract on infant baptism, which was opposed. This work is noteworthy for the fact that (as long ago noted by Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 217) it is in great measure merely a reprint of Servetus's *Christianismi Restitutio*, of which Biandrata evidently possessed a copy.⁴² The formative influence

pp. 137-150; Biandrata's contemporary letter to the Polish brethren, given by Theodor Wotschke in his 'Zur Geschichte des Antitrinitarismus,' *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, xxiii (1926), 94 ff, dated Kolozsvár, Oct. 31, 1569.

³⁹ There appears indeed to have been yet a final disputation at Gyulafehérvár late in 1570. The only extant report of it is in a considerably dramatized account written by Palaeologus (cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 580-599). After the debate at Várád Mélius had written to the King (cf. Lampe, *Historia*, p. 267) complaining that his opponents had interpreted the Scriptures arbitrarily, being ignorant of languages and of the original texts. A refutation of this charge is furnished in the present debate, in which Paruta and Sommer appear as accomplished linguists, defending their cause in the most learned manner.

Nicola Paruta was one of the early Antitrinitarians in the Venetian territory who, having to flee from the Inquisition, found refuge for many years among the Anabaptists in Moravia (it was at his house at Slavkov that Ochino died in 1564). He was later active in the early movement in Transylvania, where he collaborated with Biandrata in a confession published at Rádnoth in 1567. Johannes Sommer of Pirna near Dresden was called from Germany by Biandrata and Dávid in 1569 to succeed Károli as Rector of the Kolozsvár school where, with his learning and his fame as a poet, he greatly promoted their cause. He wrote in confutation of Károli (*cf. supra*, p. 31, note 12), was distinguished as a Greek scholar, and held that the doctrine of the Trinity was drawn from the philosophy of Plato, and was thus of pagan origin. His theses to this end are preserved in Lubieniec, *Historia*, pp. 234-238.

⁴⁰ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 144 f.

⁴¹ For a complete list of Dávid's writings, v. Szabó, *Könyvtár*, i, ii; *Egyháztörténelmi Emlékek*, pp. 24-80, appended to Jakab, *Dávid*; and some account of them in Uzoni, i, 237-241, 494-526, 551-564.

⁴² Out of a total of about 350 pages, some 265 are a reprint, with occasional rearrangement of matter, and some omissions, of about 180 pages of Servetus. For collation of the passages cf. István Borbély, *A Magyar Unitárius Egyház hitelvei a xvi. században* (The doctrines of the Unitarian Church in the 16th century), Kolozsvár, 1914, p. 42.

of Servetus upon Unitarianism in Transylvania in the time of Biandrata and Dávid, as already noted, was thus strongly marked.

The effect of the Várad disputation upon the religion of Transylvania was immediate and profound. The King, his High Chamberlain Békés, and many of the court showed open sympathy with Dávid as the debate proceeded, and the majority of the congregation approved. The King's chief ministers, many of the leading men of the country, magnates and wealthy nobles followed within a brief space of time; and the tradition is that in a single day at Gyulafehérvár seven members of the King's Council changed their religion. Throughout the land large numbers of the common people were content without question to follow the example of their chief ruler, doubtless knowing little and caring less about the technical points of theology in debate, but presumably feeling that he had good grounds for his decision; though the simplicity of the new doctrine, its apparent agreement with Scripture, and its accepted rallying-cry, 'God is one,' must have been attractive to them. Progress was so rapid that within the next year almost the whole city of Kolozsvár, thanks to the vigorous work of Sommer, Rector of the school, was seen to have gone over to the new movement; whereat Kolozsvár was forthwith excluded in disgust from the number of the seven Saxon free cities, and Szászváros was substituted. In the country at large also many of the Hungarian and Szekler churches followed the lead of Kolozsvár, so that the new religion soon held the first place in Transylvania.⁴³ This sweeping spread of the new religion is abundantly attested not only by its own writers but also by members of other confessions. Thus, not without bitterness, the Lutheran historian Haner, and the Catholics Istvánfi and Illia, complained that no one was valued at court, nor given high office or honor, unless he were an Arian, and that for this reason not a few were induced to adopt the now fashionable faith.⁴⁴

The question indeed naturally suggests itself, how much real significance there can have been in these mass conversions of whole communities in a brief space of time; whether they indicated a genuine change of deep religious convictions and were anything more than the superficial following of a new fashion. However, in the history of

⁴³ Cf. Benkő, *Transsilvania*, ii, 134.

⁴⁴ Cf. Haner, *Historia*, p. 276 f; Illia, *Ortus*, pp. 35-37; Nicolaus Isthvanfius, *Regni Hungarici Historia* (Coloniae, 1685), p. 337, with citations at length in Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 147-149.

the Reformation they were neither unique or new. We have seen in the preceding chapter how all Transylvania changed from Catholic to Protestant within a very few years, so that hardly a Catholic was left in the whole country; and it is recorded that Hermannstadt made a clean sweep of the old faith in three days. Again, a generation later, a change hardly less rapid swept most of the Hungarian and Szekler population from Lutheranism into Calvinism. Both these rapid changes of whole populations proved deep and permanent, not the ephemeral action of a fickle crowd. It must be remembered, however, that even the change from Catholic to Lutheran was not the change of an entire religion. Only three or four articles of faith were concerned; and Melancthon had insisted that there was no change in any essential doctrine. Also the change from Lutheranism to Calvinism involved only the one article concerning the Lord's Supper: the main body of doctrine was undisturbed. Even so in this latest change, the articles on the Trinity and the eternal divinity of Christ were the only ones in controversy; the rest remained, at least for the present, as they were. The general acceptance of Dávid's teaching was thus not a revolution, but only a reformation in one or two details. The great body of the Christian religion, the Christian Scriptures, Christian ideals of life and society, Christian habits of public worship, the Christian piety of individuals, Christian moral standards, remained much as they had been. It is this fundamental fact that ensured the permanence of the reform that Dávid instituted. The fashion might change again; for in less than two years after the Várad debate King John died, and his successor professing another religion replaced many of the Unitarians at his court with those of another faith, and within a few years many of their leading men were, for political reasons, put to death. Yet the great body of Dávid's followers remained steadfast, and for nearly three centuries of almost constant persecution their successors attested the permanence of their loyalty to his faith. The struggle was fierce, but it was fairly won, not by force or threats but by the sober appeal to Scripture and reason. One of their opponents soon afterwards recorded in the archives of the Chapter of the Reformed Church at Megyes that 'certainly the whole trinitarian Christian world could have furnished no man who could cope with the Unitarians, not in abuse but on grounds of Scripture and reason that could by no means be refuted.'⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Cited by Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 599.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROGRESS OF UNITARIANISM IN TRANSYLVANIA TO THE DEATH OF JOHN SIGISMUND, 1569-1571

AFTER THE GREAT VÁRAD DEBATE Mélius, though he seems to have given up his efforts to promote his cause in Transylvania, only redoubled them in his own territory in eastern Hungary. The heresy must have been evident in many places, for in the course of 1568 he was very active against the Unitarians, holding debates against them in various towns.¹ In closing the Várad debate the King promised the other side that if they wished to debate with Dávid in any public place in his dominions they might freely do so without hindrance, and that even if they wished to bring Beza or Simler from Switzerland he would pit Dávid against them,² but no advantage was taken of the permission. At the end of the authorized report of the debate, there was printed the confession of Dávid and his brethren about the one God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, as apparently the accepted conclusion of the debate, while in opposition to this, sixty Calvinist ministers from Hungary unanimously adopted and subscribed a *Sententia Catholica seu Consensus* of their own.³ Mélius was still urgent for further debate in his own territory, and invited Dávid and his brethren to assist at a disputation at Csenger or Miskolcz, offering them a safe conduct from the German ruler, promising them a safe return, and venturing to stake his life and fortune on the result,⁴ but the King had already forbidden them to go to a foreign country to debate, and they had to reply in writing to the propositions submitted for discussion.

¹ Cf. Lampe, *Historia* p. 267.

² Cf. Uzoni, *Historia* 1, 143.

³ Cf. Lampe, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-249. In the caption to this *Sententia* occurs the word *Unitarios* which if an authentic part of the original is apparently the earliest demonstrable use of the word, but it is quite possible that this caption instead of being a part of the original, is the composition of the editor, and hence of much later date.

⁴ Cf. Lampe, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

⁵ *Responsio Pastorum ac Ministrorum Ecclesiarum in Transylvania*, etc. (Claudiopolis, 1570), summarized by Uzoni, *loc. cit.*

The debates at Gyulafehérvár and Várad not only made a great impression at home but excited intense interest abroad. While the struggle was in process the Hungarian students of theology at Wittenberg, doubtless with the assistance of their professors, drew up in 1568 a strong trinitarian confession in sixteen articles which all subscribed, binding themselves by a solemn oath to be constant to it so long as they should live; and future students must do the same or else be regarded as blasphemers doomed to suffer the terrible judgment of God. Three years later this action was reaffirmed by unanimous vote, together with detailed rules for the conduct of life.⁶ Famous German theologians also took up the fight from afar against Dávid and Biandrata: Professor Girolamo Zanchi of Heidelberg and Professor Georg Major of Wittenberg wrote weighty books, the latter writing with much malice and descending to personal invective.⁷ They strove not only to confirm their own students but also to stir up Princes and people throughout western Europe against a heresy which if it continued its rapid spread might infect all Protestantism. Unitarianism was rapidly spreading at this period both in Transylvania and in the southern counties of Hungary. Stephen Basilus, who had taken a minor part in the debate at Várad, had already made some 3,000 converts there, so the local pastors Czeglédi and Károli complained.⁸ The Unitarians had a church and a famous school here until near the end of the sixteenth century.⁹ Encouraged by his success here, Basilus now, assisted by two helpers sent from Transylvania, entered on extensive missionary work in the counties of Lower Hungary, where the tolerant Turkish government made his work the easier, preaching and holding public debates with the Calvinists. Thus Unitarian views soon became wide-spread both there and west of the Danube. Unitarian preachers penetrated to the old university city of Pécs (Fünfkirchen) and won many influential converts, making this a strong centre of missionary operations. Helpers were sent from Transylvania, and the press that had been used at Gyulafehérvár

⁶ Cf. Lampe, *op cit* pp 257-262 274-279

⁷ Cf. Zanchi, *De tribus Elohim* (Heidelberg, 1572), Major, *De uno Deo et tribus personis, adversus Franc Davidis et Georgi Blandratam* (Witebergae, 1569); answered by Dávid and Biandrata, *Refutatio scripti Georgii Majoris*, etc (Koložsvár, 1569); Major, *Commonefactio ad Ecclesiam Catholicam . . contra Blandratam*, etc. (Witebergae, 1569)

⁸ Cf. Czeglédi és Károli, *Az egész Világos*, etc (In the whole world), Debreczen, 1569, cited by Uzon, 1, 149

⁹ Cf. Kanyaró, *Unitáriusok*, p 80, *Keresztény Magvető*, xviii (1883), 395.

in the Unitarian interest under King John was brought here after his death and continued to serve the same cause. The Calvinist church at Pécs was given the Unitarians in 1570, and they held it for well over a century. The rapid growth of the movement in Transylvania at this period is witnessed by the fact that after but eight years from Várad a general synod at Torda was attended by 322 ministers, with no account taken of those detained for various reasons; and in 1595 the number of churches in Transylvania and the neighboring counties had grown to more than 525, besides those in Lower Hungary.¹⁰

The golden age for Dávid's religion seemed now to be at hand. It had been victorious in discussions of the widest reach. It had been accepted by the King and his court, and by so large a proportion of the Hungarian and Szekler population that Calvinism seemed hardly to have a competent spokesman left in Transylvania proper. But Dávid, while incomparable in convincing and inspiring his followers, had as yet done little to organize them for an effective part in the religious life of the nation. It is difficult from the scanty and imperfect records accessible to form a distinct picture of a movement that was still only in its formative or, as one might say, prenatal stage. Dávid found himself indeed after the Várad debate the acknowledged leader of a large and rapidly growing number of congregations that had already five years since withdrawn their allegiance to the Augsburg Confession, and had thus been cut off from fellowship with the Saxon Lutherans; but though the congregations in the eastern counties of Hungary had now adopted the Helvetic Confession as their doctrinal standard at Debreczen in 1567, and had elected Mélius as their Superintendent, doctrines were still in the plastic stage among Dávid's churches in Transylvania. For while Biandrata and Dávid had indeed offered their own theses or propositions for discussion at several synods in recent years, yet these had not been regularly adopted by the churches themselves as the doctrinal basis of their union; and in any case, instead of being a rounded confession these covered only two or three articles of doctrine. Indeed, the so-called synods themselves had not been true synods, where matters of church administration were determined, but instead were hardly more than public debates. Nor does Dávid himself in this controversial period seem to have been still acting as a rule in the capacity of Superintendent, but to have chosen rather to act simply

¹⁰ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 149 f.

as chief minister of the Kolozsvár church, and to have subscribed himself as a 'servant of the Church of Jesus Christ,'¹¹ or as a brother minister. In short, we still have to do not with a body of churches formally organized, but only with a loose aggregation, having as yet no authorized officials to administer it, no adopted standard to rally about or appeal to, nor even an accepted name to call itself by.¹²

¹¹ Cf Lampe, *Historia*, p 225

¹² In the first Unitarian controversial book (1567) the authors call themselves *Ministri ecclesiarum consentientium in Sarmatia et Transylvania*. In the report of the disputation at Gyulafehérvár (1568) the debaters on David's side are called Ministers of the Evangelical profession, while their opponents are called Ministers of the Catholic truth, although later usage so changed that the term Evangelical was used to designate the orthodox Protestants, and the term Catholic was transferred from them to the Roman Catholics. By a similar change the term Trinitarian, generally used by Catholic writers until late in the sixteenth century to denote anti-trinitarians, came instead to be applied to believers in the Trinity (whom Catholics had hitherto called simply *orthodox*), leaving its etymological opposite, Unitarian, to designate their opponents. The new religion was slow in acquiring an accepted name, and for some time its adherents were referred to merely as 'of the Kolozsvár profession (in distinction from the Szeben profession' or Lutherans), or as of Francis David's religion, or as of the other religion or church' (cf *Magyar Emlékek* II, 231, 123).

The historical origin of the name Unitarian has been long and persistently misrepresented on the sole authority of Peter Bod, a Calvinistic author who in his *Smirna Szent Polikarpus* (1766), p 22 (substantially repeated in his *Historia Unitariorum* Lugduni Batavorum, 1781, p 43 f, and his *Historia Hungarorum Ecclesiastica*, I, 412 f) states that the name is derived from a *unio* of David's followers with the other confessions as decreed at the Diet of Torda in 1563 (*supra* Ms p 46 f). This statement, which has been blindly followed by many later writers, is pure conjecture first put forth after the lapse of a century. It is historically incorrect since the legalizing of limited religious toleration in 1563 did not constitute any *union* of religions, which continued mutually opposed to one another, it is etymologically absurd, since the noun *unio* does not yield the adjective *unitarius*; it is not supported by a shred of evidence, and it was contradicted by more careful writers both before and after, cf Andrew Wiszowaty in Christopher Sandius, *Bibliotheca Antitrinitariorum* (Freistadt Amsterdam, 1684) p 225, Ferencz Horváth, *Apologia Fratrum Unitariorum* (Kolozsvár, 1701), p A2a, Benko, *Transsilvania* (1777), II, 135, Székely, *Történetek* (1839), pp 72-74. The authentic origin is given, as below, in a careful study *De cognominatone Unitariorum* by Uzon, *Historia*, I, 183-193.

The name originated at the time of the great dispute at Gyulafehérvár in 1568, in the course of which Melius quite often concluded his argument by saying, *Ergo Deus est trinitarius*. He also used the word in a work now lost and known to us only by quotations from it in Dávid's *Refutatio scripti Petri Melii* (Gyulafehérvár, 1567), cf Uzon, *Historia*, I, 502 f. Hence his party naturally came to be called Trinitarians; and their opponents would naturally be called Unitarians. The name seems thus to have come into general use only gradually, and it was long before it was employed in the formal proclamations of their Superintendents. With the possible exception named above (Ms p 81, n 1), it is not found in print as the denomination of the church until 1600, when the *unitaria religio* is named as one of the four received religions in a decree of the Diet of Léczfalva (cf *Magyar Emlékek*, IV, 551) in the extreme southeastern part of Transylvania. The name

So long as King John lived and showed them his favor, Dávid's churches might expect to prosper; but his hold on life seemed precarious, and never so much so as in the two years following the Várad disputation. However much the religious liberty of individuals might be guaranteed by existing decrees, if he were suddenly to die, with the churches so poorly organized as they were, and lacking any legal protection for their common cause, their future as a body would be dubious. Dávid and the leaders of his churches therefore persuaded the King to bring their cause before the Diet and secure them the protection of a definite status, enjoying equal rights with the other religious bodies.¹³ This he willingly did at the Diet of Maros-Vásárhely, January 6-14, 1571, where the churches adhering to Dávid were granted formal recognition as one of the 'received religions,' enjoying equally with Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists the constitutional right of freedom in public worship and of access to public honors and offices. This right was confirmed and repeatedly reaffirmed at subsequent Diets, and the law about the four received religions was later embodied in the second article of the Approved Constitutions of the land,¹⁴ which each ruler upon taking office was required henceforth to take solemn oath that he would defend and maintain; whereas the other existing religions were merely 'tolerated,' and any rights they were allowed to exercise might at any time be withdrawn without protection from the law.¹⁵

was never used by the Socinians in Poland, but late in the seventeenth century Transylvanian Unitarian students made it well known in Holland, where the Socinians in exile, who had never adopted Socinian as the name of their movement and were more and more objecting to it, welcomed it as distinguishing them from Trinitarians. It thus gradually superseded the term Socinian, and spread to England and America, as will be seen.

¹³ Cf. Benko, *Transsylvania* II, 134 f.

¹⁴ *Approbatæ Constitutiones Regni Transylvaniæ et partium Hungariæ eidem annexarum* (Varadini, 1653). The Article concerned reads as follows: 'The four received religions of the realm are henceforth perpetually to be regarded as authorized, following the praiseworthy example of our ancestors of blessed memory, since both the continuance of our common fatherland and the Constitution of the realm and the agreements made between the Estates demand this. These four received religions, namely, the Evangelical Reformed (or Calvinist), the Lutheran or Augsburg, the Roman Catholic, the Unitarian or Antitrinitarian, shall be allowed henceforth free practice in the places usual according to the Constitutions of the realm. Pars I, tit. 1, art. 2.'

¹⁵ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, II, 280, 374. The extant records of the Diet do not give any explicit or detailed statement of the terms of this action, but the action taken at subsequent Diets clearly assumes and confirms what is here said. Cf. Jakab, *Dávid*, p. 184. Haner's statement (*Historia*, p. 287), that after very serious discussion Dávid and the

In 1744 legal recognition was given also to the Greek Catholic Church.

King John's action in securing legal recognition for the Unitarian churches at this Diet was his last public act, and it was none too soon; for it barely saved those churches from the extinction that was later to overcome their brethren in Poland. On the next day, after the members of the Diet had departed, he went, accompanied by Dávid, Biandrata and a few close friends, to seek relaxation in a hunting expedition in the neighboring forests of the Szeklerland. He first drove in a carriage to his castle at Vécs, but on the way, as they were turning into a side road, the spirited horses accidentally ran off the side of the road so violently that he was shaken up and seriously hurt. When he had recovered he went on to Görgény, but there he soon fell seriously ill and had to keep his bed for nearly two months of intense suffering. When at length able to be moved he was placed upon pillows and bolsters and taken slowly back to his capital. Here serious complications set in from which he was unable to rally. Foreseeing the end he made his will, and died on March 14, 1571, in his thirty-first year,¹⁶ the only Unitarian King in history.¹⁷

After the customary period of forty days' mourning for a sovereign, the formal obsequies were performed, with an eloquent eulogy pronounced by Johannes Sommer, Rector of the school at Kolozsvár; after which the body was entombed in the vestibule of the cathedral at Gyulafehérvár, beside that of his mother the Queen Isabella.¹⁸

Judgments and opinions on the character and services of John Sigismund have varied widely, and have often been influenced by religious prepossessions. Bishop Forgács of Várad, who eventually deserted his

Prince obtained nothing but that under the name of the Unitarian religion as defined by certain articles they were bound to live in the city of Kolozsvár, is not supported by any authority, and seems wholly improbable. Uzoni (*Historia*, i, 201 ff) makes a valiant attempt to show that the Unitarian religion was the second in order to be legalized, and the Catholic the last; but his reasoning has not been generally accepted. Cf. Burian, *Dissertatio*, pp. 215-235.

¹⁶ Cf. Isthvanfius, *Historia*, p. 319a; Forgács, *Commentarii*, pp. 621-624; Lampe, *Historia*, p. 687; Haner, *Historia*, p. 289; Bod, *Historia*, i, 429.

¹⁷ This is not quite to forget the case of Mózes Székely, who was elected Prince of Transylvania in 1603, but was killed in battle before he could be fairly seated on his throne; nor that of the Russian Pretender Demetrius, who briefly flourished two or three years later. Cf. *supra*, vol. i, 422 f.

¹⁸ Both tombs were rifled by the Tatars in 1658.

King and went over to his enemy the Emperor Maximilian, considering John as a conspicuously wicked and abandoned heretic, regarded him as a sink of all iniquities, and could find nothing good to say of either his mother or him.¹⁹ Istvánfi, writing in the next century, followed the same line, and concluded his account with the judgment that 'he doubtless went to hell.'²⁰ On the other hand, the Lutheran jurist and historian Miles, despite a wide difference of religion, gives a sympathetic account, and calls John 'a noble hero, who was a true ornament of his age and a mirror of all virtues, who was so endowed by nature and so manly and heroic in his spirit, that had his slight body, his limited strength and his feeble constitution been equal to his active spirit and his dauntless courage, he might have surpassed all the monarchs and heroes of his time.'²¹ While Giovanandrea Gromo, who was at his court for two years as commander of the King's Italian body-guard, in an account dedicated to his ruling prince, the Duke Cosimo de' Medici of Florence, represents him as kind and generous in his nature, an accomplished linguist, expert in music, temperate in his habits, excelling in manly sports, brave in danger, an exemplar of high minded virtue.²² He generously promoted education, founding secular schools and colleges in place of the old monastic schools, and invited able foreign scholars to conduct them. He was also a generous patron of music and the arts, and enjoyed the recreation of conversation with learned men.

Yet even the most sympathetic judgment can hardly pronounce John Sigismund a great ruler. His span of life was too short, the limitations of his health were too serious, his sphere of influence was too narrow, and the external situations that he had to face were too hostile, for him to reach a great stature. The plastic years of his youth were passed in exile, and provided but poor training for his future responsibilities as king, while his anxious and over-watchful mother doubtless kept him too long dependent upon her. His bodily health was never strong, and throughout his mature life he was a chronic sufferer from intestinal troubles. Worst of all, he early became subject to attacks of epilepsy, which increased in frequency and violence as the anxieties of state and

¹⁹ *Op cit* pp 624-630

²⁰ *Op cit* p 319b

²¹ Cf Matthias Miles, *Siebenburgischer Wurgengel* (Hermanstadt, 1670), p 136

²² Cf Gromo, *Uebersicht*, p 35 f. His portrait in Antonio Possevino, *Transilvania* (Budapest, 1913), p 89

his personal troubles weighed upon him, so that his life was several times despaired of²³

As King of Transylvania he had a very troubled reign. Ambitious magnates in his own dominions, encouraged by foreign powers, raised a rebellion which had to be sternly put down. His enemies plotted against his person, and his life was attempted no less than nine times.²⁴ The Emperors Ferdinand and Maximilian never relaxed their claim to sovereignty over his country, pressed it from time to time as circumstances favored, and stirred up his neighbors to weaken or distract him by invasion. He was thus kept in intermittent war during most of his reign, alternately victorious and forced to appeal to the Sultan for assistance. His campaigns and negotiations were carried on with firmness and skill, and often with success, for he had fortunately chosen wise and able counselors, and when in 1566 Maximilian had succeeded in poisoning the Sultan's mind against him, he boldly determined to go to the Turkish camp in person, and thus he restored himself to confidence. But when at length it became clear that Transylvania had no prospect of winning its long struggle against the forces of the Empire, he sought peace. He had been publicly betrothed to the Emperor's youngest daughter Johanna when his mother resigned her power in 1551, though when she was restored in 1566 this was broken off because he was then unwilling to renounce his title as King.²⁵ Both he and his leading subjects, however, were very desirous that he marry, that he might leave an heir to the throne. To that end several futile essays were made. King Henry II of France, seeking broader alliances, offered his daughter in 1558, and two years later the Sultan urged his marriage with Margaret of Valois, sister of Charles IX, though nothing came of either plan;²⁶ but now that his health was less and less certain, and he had grown weary of the fruitless contest, and the future welfare of his people was at stake, he was persuaded once more to seek peace and friendship with the Emperor.

The delicate negotiations were placed in the hands of the King's most

²³ Cf. Possevino, *Transilvania*, p. 94, Bethlen, *Historia*, II, 211. This complaint was perhaps the reason why he chose for his personal physician Dr. Biandrata, who had established a reputation for his treatment of such cases, e.g., that of Lismanino in Poland. *v. supra*, vol. I, p. 317, n. 47.

²⁴ Cf. Elek Jakab, 'János Zsigmond élete és uralkodása' (Life and reign of J. S.), *Keresztény Magvető* II (1863), 287.

²⁵ Cf. Bethlen, *Historia*, II, 1-7, 26-37.

²⁶ Cf. Jakab, *J. Zsigmond*, p. 181 f.

trusted counselor, Gáspár Békés, who had already rendered him distinguished service as his envoy to the Sultan. With a brilliant escort, bearing splendid gifts, and accompanied by an influential sponsor from the King of Poland, Békés sought the Emperor first at Prague and then at Speyer.²⁷ A treaty was drawn up in the summer of 1570 providing that old enmities should be buried, that John was to give up the title of King on which he had so long insisted, and was instead to have the quasi royal title of Most Serene Prince; that he was to have the hereditary right to all of Transylvania, and during his life-time was also to rule over the neighboring counties of Hungary, and finally that he was to have in marriage one of the nieces of the Emperor.²⁸ The Emperor signed the treaty and Békés triumphantly returned to Transylvania with it to be signed by John, who was elated that his troubles promised now to be at an end. On the day after Christmas, now that the King's health had somewhat improved, Békés set out again for Prague, where the treaty was duly confirmed by the Imperial Diet.²⁹ But meanwhile the King again fell seriously ill, and he was further depressed by the report that the daughter of the Duke of Bavaria had refused to marry him on account of his 'Arianism,' and that another niece, daughter of the Duke of Julich, was not desirable, being ill favored, and ignorant of any language but German.³⁰ Before ever Békés was able to return to his side, John took a serious turn for the worse and died at the middle of March, as has already been related. This unexpected event created a serious situation for all concerned, as will presently appear.³¹

Whatever may be judged of John Sigismund as a civil ruler, embarrassed as he constantly was by a nation of disunited elements within, and by powerful enemies ceaselessly plotting to overthrow him from without, yet in one respect he stands preeminent over the other rulers of his time; for he was throughout his reign a resolute champion of freedom of conscience and of liberty in the choice and exercise of religion. Predisposed by the experiences of his youth, and doubtless influenced by his teachers and advisers, but also observing the ruinous consequences of conflicts over matters of religion, he was at the beginning of his reign

²⁷ It was here and on this occasion that Neuser and Sylvan of Heidelberg went to consult with Békés in connection with their religious interests *v supra*, vol 1, p 259

²⁸ Cf Bethlen, *Historia*, II, 197-200

²⁹ Cf Bethlen, *op cit*, II, 204-206

³⁰ Cf Isthvanfius, *Historia*, p 319a

³¹ For an apologetic study of the life of John Sigismund, cf Jakab, *J Zsigmond* and for his life while in exile, cf Szádeczky, *Izabella*

ready to carry on and extend the principle first decreed in his mother's regency, that every one may hold the faith of his choice without offence given or wrong suffered or done by any. This principle, as we have seen, was repeatedly confirmed and enlarged by successive Diets in the course of his reign until the very eve of his death, when as contrasted with all the other nations of the time, the four main religions of Transylvania were by law bound together to maintain complete religious freedom for themselves and entire toleration for one another, while the minor religions also practically enjoyed equal toleration if not equal privileges. Thus at a time when in other countries the privileged religions were exercising pressure more or less severe to overthrow or exterminate their rivals, no religious persecution was permitted in Transylvania under the rule of John Sigismund. Nay more, at a period when his own religion through open debate had won a sweeping popular victory, and when it was espoused by the great majority of the members of his government, no advantage was taken of the opportunity to secure especial privileges for it, but equal rights and privileges were secured for all four of the received religions. In the year when King John issued his final charter, guaranteeing full religious liberty to even the most bitterly opposed of all the reformed sects, Protestant theologians were still praising Calvin for having burned Servetus alive, the Inquisition was shedding Protestant blood in the Netherlands, the massacre of Protestants in France on St. Bartholomew's eve was still a year and a half in the future, and more than forty years were still to pass before persons ceased to be burned at the stake in England for holding wrong religious opinions; while even in Poland it was not until more than two years later that Catholics and Protestants agreed in the common interest not to shed each other's blood.

This enlightened and resolute stand on the part of the King was not maintained without the bitterest opposition. Not only was he abused and maligned by the orthodox confessions at home and abroad, but he was tempted by alluring inducements from Catholic sources to secure great political advantages by changing his faith. Even Biandrata seems to have favored his compliance.⁸² Nevertheless, being firmly convinced by the persuasive preaching of Dávid, the King remained true to his convictions and acted consistently with them; though even after his death malicious slanders of his name continued, so that his successor

⁸² Cf. László Szálai, *Magyarország történetei* (History of Hungary), Pest, 1860, iv, 329; Jakab, *J. Zsigmond*, p. 182.

Stephen Báthory found it necessary to issue a sharp edict against such evil men.³³ Thus under his leadership in his short reign the Reformation was consistently carried out without bloodshed, and although the principle of religious liberty for all was often infringed in later generations, the four received religions have never renounced it, and it has been their proud tradition for nearly four hundred years

King John's death while Békés was absent on his mission had serious consequences. Békés had long been his most intimate counselor, had successfully conducted his most important negotiations with both Emperor and Sultan, had taken sympathetic interest in his religious reforms, and he was named in the King's will (of which he was made an executor) as his choice for his successor on the throne. He himself confidently looked forward to being the next ruler of Transylvania, and hence was extremely reluctant to undertake this latest mission when the King's life seemed so uncertain, and finally did so only upon the insistence of the King and his leading men.³⁴ Had he been present to take charge of affairs when the King died he would no doubt have been elected in his place; but in his absence various factors worked against him. He had spent his youth in the household of Petrovics, who at his death recommended him to Isabella and the young Prince as an adviser in war and in peace.³⁵ Through his abilities, character and important services he won the complete favor of the King, was rapidly advanced to the highest offices, and was given princely estates in Fogaras County on the southern border of the country; and he had wide popularity among the middle nobility. But the fact that he was not of pure Hungarian origin, being the son of a Wallack mother and a Hungarian father of only the middle nobility, made some disaffected toward him; while there were also many influential men that envied him for his sudden rise to higher station than their own, hated him for his religion, and disliked him for his haughtiness and arrogance.³⁶ Thus much feeling against him was stirred up in the months of his long absence. He had secured ratification of the treaty with Maximilian, and was still arranging details in Vienna when word came of the King's death. He at once set out for Transylvania, bearing letters from the Emperor in

³³ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, II, 500

³⁴ Cf. Wolfgang Bethlen, *Historiae Pannonico Dacicae* (Kersed, 1687), p. 278 f

³⁵ Cf. János Urmossy, 'Bekes Gáspár', *Unitarius Kozlony* (Koloszvár), I, (1888), 214, Lajos Szadecký, *Koronyai Békés Gáspár* (Budapest, 1887); and his portrait in Possevinó, *Transilvania*, p. 117

³⁶ Cf. Haner, *Historia*, p. 290

his favor addressed to various leading nobles; but an illness made his progress slow. Meantime danger from neighboring enemies made it necessary to set up a temporary government, and his chief rival, Christopher Báthory, was made interim ruler until the Diet should hold an election. He had preceded Békés as High Chamberlain, and but for his impaired health might himself have been elected to the vacant throne, but as it was he used his influence in favor of his younger brother Stephen; and as fear was entertained that Békés might allow the Emperor to encroach upon their liberties, and as the Sultan threw his weight against him, the majority cast their votes for Báthory. As the new treaty was now in force, the new ruler bore not the title of King, but that of Vaivode formerly used. The election was duly confirmed by both Emperor and Sultan.³⁷

Although the date for the election had been deferred,³⁸ yet Békés did not arrive with his letters from the Emperor until just too late. As he entered the city he heard the sound of the *vivats* in the church acclaiming the new ruler. Angry and bitterly disappointed of his dearest hopes, he turned into an inn, and after taking counsel of his companions left that night for his castle at Fogaras, whence he wrote the Emperor that Stephen had not been duly elected, and that he himself had as many votes, and asked that he therefore be made joint Vaivode.³⁹ In the meantime the new Vaivode, having taken oath to abide by the Constitution of the kingdom and to preserve for the people their religious freedom and all their ancient liberties, had the royal obsequies performed for the late King. Békés, on the other hand, shut himself up in his castle, collected a following among the malcontents, and began to stir up trouble for the new ruler. For the next four years he carried on as a free baron, acknowledging no allegiance to the present ruler of Transylvania, and ignoring summons to attend meetings of the Diet.⁴⁰ He won a large following among the Szeklers, who nourished a grievance over having been deprived of some of their liberties under the previous ruler, and stirred up among them a short-lived insurrection.

After enduring two years of this public disorder, Báthory suddenly besieged Békés in his castle, who taken by surprise contrived to make a clever escape, and taking his most valuable treasures made his way to

³⁷ Cf. Benkő, *Transsilvania*, i, 226. Forgacius, *Commentarii*, p. 640, says the vote was unanimous.

³⁸ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, ii, 450-458.

³⁹ Cf. Bethlen, *op. cit. supra*, p. 286.

⁴⁰ For this whole period, cf. Bethlen, *Historia*, ii, lib. vi; *Epistolae et Acta*, i, 8-10.

the Emperor at Prague, to whom he had already appealed. Báthory now convened a Diet at Megyes, to which he reported the whole situation. Though many took the part of Békés, yet he was adjudged guilty of treason and hence proscribed, and his property was confiscated. Békés now, secretly encouraged by the Emperor,⁴¹ gathered from various quarters a large force and took the open field against Báthory; but his rebellion was unsuccessful, and he was decisively defeated at the middle of 1575. Békés himself escaped, but of his followers among the Szekler nobility nine of the chief ones were beheaded in the market place at Kolozsvár, many were hanged or mutilated, many more were long imprisoned, yet others fled the country, and all lost their estates.⁴²

To finish with Békés. For some time he had led the life of a hunted fugitive, and being forced to leave Hungary he fled to Poland, where he was for a time imprisoned. But at length, in the year after Stephen Báthory had become King of that country, occurred the most surprising event of all his eventful career. Through the intercession of the King's successor and brother Christopher,⁴³ Békés, seeing no other hope of recovering his fortune, now sought the King's friendship, was pardoned by him and received into full favor, was given a Polish castle to compensate for his loss of that at Fogaras, was loaded with riches and honors, was made commander of the King's body-guard, was his tent-mate and closest companion in the campaign against Muscovy, and as an able general served him faithfully during the remaining two years of his life.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Since he regarded the election of Báthory as a victory of the Sultan's diplomacy over his own.

⁴² As Unitarianism had been very prevalent among the Szeklers, the crushing defeat of Békés meant a serious weakening of their cause, since so many of them thus lost their lives or their property, and the loyalty of them all was long under suspicion.

⁴³ Who, as now Voivode of Transylvania, may have thought this the surest way to win back the loyal support of Békés's many followers among the Szeklers. The influence of Biadrits, to whom Stephen was under deep obligations for his new throne, was doubtless no small factor.

⁴⁴ Cf. Úrmossy, Bekes, p. 218 f, Bethlen, *Historia*, II, 431-433, Uzoni, *Historia*, I, 611-614. Bekes died at Grodno in November, 1579, eight days before Dávid. His tomb is on the summit of a hill near Wilno. Religious hatred of the famous 'Arian' (who evidently remained such until death) attributed to him an epitaph composed as he was about to die, breathing blatant materialism and atheism and abjuring all Christian faith, but it was early proved to be a forgery. Cf. Henryk Merczyng, 'Polscy deści i wolno myślicielscy za Jagiellonów', *Przegląd Historyczny*, XII (1911), 3 f; Tadeusz Grabowski, *Literatura Aryjska w Polsce* (Arian Literature in Poland), Kraków, 1908, p. 99, *Monumenta Poloniae Vaticana* (Cracoviae, 1913-15), IV, 508, 542, 553.

CHAPTER V

UNITARIANISM IN TRANSYLVANIA TO THE DEATH OF FRANCIS DÁVID 1571-1579

THE ACCESSION of Stephen Báthory to the rule formerly held by John Sigismund marked a turning point both for Transylvania and for the Unitarian congregations in it. It meant that the ruling prince was henceforth to be the acknowledged vassal of the Emperor, and also that the Unitarians were no longer to enjoy the especial favor and sympathy of their ruler. In itself the choice of Stephen was an admirable one. He was thirty-eight years old, and came of an ancient and illustrious Hungarian family. His father had already served as Vaivode of Transylvania under King John Zápolya, and he himself had been Governor of Várad. He was of royal stature and handsome appearance, had been liberally educated at the University of Padua and was fluent in Latin. A polished gentleman and a very able general, experienced in public affairs at home and abroad, he had been a favored member of the Emperor's court, and he proved himself a fair, just and impartial man and a wise and firm ruler.¹ The Báthorys were one of the only eight noble families and three magnates in Transylvania who had remained Catholic when the Reformation swept the country, and the Catholic reaction began under him. But though he had always retained his own Catholic chaplain he was broad-minded; as ruler of a country overwhelmingly Protestant he attended Protestant worship as long as he remained in Transylvania,² and while resisting all efforts of John Sigismund to convert him,³ refused to abridge the religious liberty decreed by the Constitution, and showed himself under the law impartial toward the several religions. Early in his reign, when urged not to show so much favor to Protestants, he replied in words often quoted to his credit, that he was King of the people, not of their consciences, and that God had reserved three things for himself: to create

¹ Cf. Bethlen, *Historia*, ii, 215-222; *Epistolae et Acta*, i, 6.

² Cf. Lampe, *Historia*, p. 326.

³ Cf. *Epistolae et Acta*, i, 6, 32.

something out of nothing, to have foreknowledge of future events, and to be Lord over consciences.⁴ Although he chose new councilors for his court, dismissing most of the Unitarians whom John had about him, he nevertheless retained Biandrata as his physician and as Privy Councilor, not to mention also Bucella, Squarcialupi and Simone, all physicians, as well as Békés, Berzeviczy and others by no means orthodox who attended him in Transylvania or Poland.

Dávid of course ceased to be court preacher when John died, and the Unitarians no longer had the privilege of the press patronized by the King at Gyulafehérvár, instead the new ruler early in his reign issued an edict of strict censorship over the printing, circulation or sale of all printed works.⁵ This edict was issued with definite reference to the works of Unitarian writers then widely circulated in his dominions. From this time on, therefore, for more than two centuries Unitarians in Transylvania were unable to publish with their previous freedom, and their propaganda was thus greatly hampered.⁶

After the political peace of the country had been brought about by the defeat of Békés, King Stephen's next concern was to quiet the religious confusion that had prevailed. He ordered the leaders of the Saxon churches to meet and bring their doctrine and practices into harmony with the Augsburg Confession, and to elect a new Superintendent in place of the one lately deceased, who should enforce strict discipline in place of the prevailing looseness.⁷ As there were quite too few Catholics to compose his court, he seems to have chosen his councilors largely from those Hungarians that had separated from the Lutherans in 1564, but were not now following Dávid. From this party he restored Alesius to his old post as court preacher, and he later became Superintendent of the Reformed Church in Transylvania proper.⁸

⁴ Cf. Haner, *Historia*, p. 295, Lampe *Historia*, p. 281, Bod, *Historia*, 1, 429, Uzoni *Historia*, 1, 192.

⁵ For this edict, cf. *Egyháztörténelmi Emlékek*, p. 14, appended to Jakab's *David*.

⁶ After the accession of Heltai to their cause in 1569, they published more and more on his press at Kolozsvár, though subject to a censorship that prevented controversial or other wise offensive works. Thus Bishop Enyedi's *Explicationes locorum Veteris & Novi Testamenti* printed in 1597 was prohibited and many copies burned by order of Sigismund Bathory. It was clandestinely reprinted in Holland in 1670.

⁷ Cf. Haner, *Historia*, pp. 290-294.

⁸ Melius from his seat at Debreczen had done his best to rally the shattered remnants of Calvinism in Transylvania, but he died in 1572, and it was perhaps then that Alesius was made Superintendent of the surviving Reformed congregations.

As for the Unitarian churches, King Stephen faithfully observed the privileges that had been granted them under King John in 1571 as one of the received religions, although as a loyal Catholic he could of course not look upon them with any particular favor. At the Diet at Torda in May, 1572, he confirmed King John's decree of religious freedom; but in the same breath he gave warning that if anyone introduced any innovation in religion he should be investigated, and if found guilty of preaching a different faith from that of the late King, he should be excommunicated or otherwise punished according to his deserts.⁹ The warning was repeated and made more strict at the Kolozsvár Diet a year later, and on several occasions later yet.¹⁰ The matter of innovation in religion was a very thorny and critical subject in the period of the Reformation, and nowhere more so than in Transylvania. It referred to any considerable change in doctrines or usages, since these were bound to create heated differences and often to disturb religious or civil peace. As early as 1548 the Diet at Torda under Queen Isabella had decreed that in the matter of religion no one should henceforth dare make any innovation;¹¹ though the decree did not avail, as had been hoped, to check the progress of the Reformation. But Stephen had seen too much of the disturbances growing out of religious disputes to be indifferent to them, hence he determined if possible to prevent them. The idea seems to have been that the surest way to avoid religious dissension was to require each of the received religions to maintain the *status quo* unchanged, and thus to discourage any further development of the Reformation. This policy was soon to involve Dávid in tragic consequences, as will presently be seen; but in the meantime trouble arose for him from a more intimate quarter.

It appears that Dávid and his young wife¹² were unhappily married,

⁹ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, ii, 422 f, 528, 534. The statement of Benkö, *Transsilvania*, ii, 221 f, is inaccurate.

¹⁰ Cf. *Emlékek*, ii, 541, 577; iii, 17 f, 122, 125, 240.

¹¹ Cf. *Emlékek*, i, 218.

¹² As nearly as can be made out from the scattered and scanty data, Dávid seems to have been thrice married. The first wife, married in 1557 (Jakab, *Dávid*, p. 212), who had borne him several children, died shortly before 1572 (cf. letter of Paksi to Simler, *Miscellanea Tigurina*, ii, 216). The second was Catharine Barát, daughter of the Burgo-master, quite young and rich, whom he married in 1572 (*ibid.*). She sued him for divorce in 1574, and was still living at Kolozsvár in 1583 (cf. Possevino, *Transilvania*, p. 131; *id.*, *De sectariorum nostri temporis atheismis*, Coloniae, 1586, p. 84b). The third is mentioned by Biandrata in a letter to Palaeologus, 1578 (cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 243).

and that in 1574 she petitioned for a separation. Until comparatively recent times it has been customary in Transylvania to try divorce cases in the church courts, whence many scandals eventually resulted from the ease with which divorces could be obtained.¹³ It was Dávid's wish that this case be determined by the civil court, and a decree was given by it in his favor; but his wife was dissatisfied and the case was retried, still with the same result. She then appealed to the Prince to intervene, and after a hearing he remanded the case to the court of the Reformed Church under the superintendence of Alesius, since the Unitarian churches were not yet properly organized for the purpose, and had no authorized Superintendent. The case dragged on and at length came to trial at a special synod convened at Enyed in 1576 by order of the Prince, before a panel composed of both Hungarian and Saxon ministers. The extant records of the case are vague and indefinite as to details, but it seems to have been a case of serious incompatibility, marked by incessant quarreling, and involving factors of jealousy, abusive language, defiance, and an interfering mother in law. The court found fault on both sides; and as the mutual alienation had gone too far for any reasonable hope of reconciliation, a separation was approved.¹⁴ It is significant that the prevailing public sentiment at Kolozsvár was strongly on the side of Dávid, and that he continued to be the idol of the city and the church. Orthodox opponents, however, magnified the episode to the prejudice of Dávid and his cause, which was thus doubtless somewhat weakened by it.

While Stephen was still settling accounts with the rebels who had followed Békés, the throne of Poland suddenly fell vacant. King Henry, after a few short months in Poland, received word that his brother the King of France had died, and in greatest secrecy he hastened away to claim the throne for himself, leaving his kingdom exposed to imminent danger of attack from hostile neighbors on the east; whereupon the Diet formally 'exaugurated' him, and proceeded to choose a new King. Several candidates for the vacant throne ap-

¹³ In 1895 a law was passed taking from the Church its jurisdiction in cases of marriage and divorce and placing them in the hands of the civil court.

¹⁴ The verdict is given by Bod, *Historia*, I, 347-349, and by Jakab Elek, *Oklevéltár Kolozsvár Torténete* (Kolozsvár Historical Archives), Budapest, 1888, II, 123. Cf. also Károly Szabo, 'Dávid Ferencz Valopére,' *Erdelyi Protestáns Közlöny*, XI (1881), 340 f. Gergely Benczedi, same title, *Keresztény Magvető*, XX (1885), 363 ff. Haner's brief account (*Historia*, p. 297 f.), is exaggerated and marked by violent prejudice.

peared, and competition between them was intense, but it lay chiefly between the Emperor Maximilian and Stephen Báthory.¹⁵ Each was ably represented at the electoral Diet: the Emperor by Andreas Dudith, and Báthory by his trusted physician and Privy Councilor, Biandrata. Both were amply supplied with funds and used them freely to influence the election.¹⁶ Báthory was finally chosen, and he rewarded Biandrata's faithful and able services by the gift of three villages near Kolozsvár, valued at 5,000 florins.¹⁷ As soon as his election was confirmed, Stephen reported the fact to the Diet and recommended that his elder brother Christopher be chosen to govern the country as Vaivode in his absence. He himself retained the title of Prince of Transylvania, and as long as he lived was regularly consulted in all weighty matters, and signed the more important documents.¹⁸

Christopher Báthory had the same high qualities as his brother Stephen, but he suffered from ill health, and he was inclined to be less broad-minded than Stephen; but Biandrata was still kept as his court physician and Privy Councilor and had great influence with him. He succeeded to power in 1576, though Stephen as still ruling Prince kept a long-range supervision of affairs in Transylvania. Despite the setbacks they had received in consequence of the death of King John, the Unitarians, though no longer so aggressive as before, continued to grow and now began to pay more attention to the organization of their churches. Their experience with Dávid's divorce trial will have made them realize the importance of having an authorized Superintendent of their own. At the Diet of Megyes therefore in 1576 it was decreed (evidently in response to a petition) 'that those brethren that are of the religion of Francis Dávid may have Francis Dávid for their Superintendent, and if he dies or becomes ill, or is for any other reason replaced, they may replace him and substitute another with the same authority; provided only that in the matter of religion he shall introduce no innovation, but it shall remain in the state in which he found it.'¹⁹ By this

¹⁵ Cf. Bethlen, *Historia*, ii, 386-419.

¹⁶ Cf. Georgius Pray, *Epistolae procerum regni Hungariae* (Posonii, 1806), iii, 195-204.

¹⁷ Cf. *Epistolae et Acta*, i, 130 f. These three villages had been a part of the endowment of an abbey at Kolozsvár, which had been taken over by the government when Isabella returned in 1551, and had now fallen again to the public treasury. Biandrata later sold them, and in 1581 Stephen bought them back again and gave them for the endowment of the Jesuit college.

¹⁸ Cf. Bethlen, *op. cit.*, ii, 423 f.

¹⁹ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, ii, 577, 449; Benkő, *Transsilvania*, ii, 136 f.

Decree the Unitarians at last had a lawful Superintendent of their own, and Dávid having in the first place been Lutheran Superintendent, and then Reformed Superintendent, now at length became Superintendent of the Unitarian churches²⁰

Prince Stephen Báthory had from the first urgently desired to see the Catholic Church regain, at least to some extent, the position that it had lost in the past generation, and since the existing laws, and his promise faithfully to respect them, forbade persecution by force, his policy was to try to extirpate heresy and regain converts to the old faith by the milder means of preaching and teaching. To this end he tried to have missionary priests sent from Hungary, promising them freedom to reenter the country from which they had been driven out a few years before. But Hungary was then so poverty stricken and priests were so few, and the country was so demoralized by continual wars, that in a whole year he was able to obtain hardly a single recruit. He therefore next appealed to the Jesuits for aid, although it was again several years before his request could be answered from this quarter.²¹ In the meantime little more could be done than to insist on strict observance of the law by the heretical Protestants, of whom the most feared and hated were the Unitarians.

We have already seen that in the first year of his rule Stephen issued a sharp warning against extending the reformation further through any 'innovation' in religion, and that the warning was repeated at almost every Diet as long as Stephen lived. The warning was obviously aimed at the Unitarians, and now their activity was restricted in another way. At the Diet of Kolozsvár in 1576 they were granted permission to hold synods for ministers of their own faith at Kolozsvár or Torda, but not to have authority over the Calvinists there, who had a Superintendent of their own.²² At the Diet of Torda in the next year the restriction was made more definite. Although they had congregations in many parts

²⁰ At the Diet of Torda in 1572 the language of the decree confirming the rights of the Unitarian churches granted the previous year clearly implies that Dávid was *not* then regarded as Superintendent of the Unitarian churches, but only as their leading minister, the Superintendent referred to being doubtless Alesius of the Reformed Church, from which the Unitarians had not yet formally separated. Cf. *Magyar Emlekek*, II, 528, 'O nagysága Dávid Ferenczet és az superintendentst hívassa hozzá' Benko, *op. cit.*, II, 221.

²¹ Cf. the letter of the Jesuit father Szántó to his superior, *Epistolae et Acta*, I, 7 f.

²² Cf. *Magyar Emlekek*, III, 108, 8. At this period Kolozsvár and Torda were almost entirely Unitarian. Calvinists had been tolerated there from 1572, but they were few in number, worshipping in private houses.

of the country, and especially in Szeklerland, the Unitarians were now allowed to hold synods *only* at Kolozsvár and Torda; whereas the new Reformed Superintendent, Andrew Sándor of Torda, was authorized to act and to hold synods anywhere in the land, and to try if possible to convert ministers of other faiths. This law was for some time enforced throughout Transylvania, and in the remote Szekler county of Háromszék it held for well over a century, until 1693, during all which time the Unitarian churches there might not be visited nor have their ministers ordained by their own Superintendent, but only by one of the Reformed faith.²³ This unfriendly legislation of the Diet, however acceptable it may have been to the Prince, was after all the doing of the members of the Diet, and it indicates that the Lutherans and the Calvinists (for there were still but few Catholics in the government) were acting in concert against a common adversary. Nevertheless the Unitarians went on their way undaunted, and in the next year (1578) held a synod at Torda at which 322 ministers were present, coming from all parts of the country, and took action on several important matters. But dark clouds were gathering over their heads, though little did they dream that in the next year a storm was to break that would involve their leader in tragedy and threaten their church with extinction.

After the death of King John, Dávid being now no longer court preacher was restricted in his activities to being simply chief preacher in the great church at Kolozsvár, although in this sphere he exercised commanding influence. But he could no longer reach the public eye through books printed on the press at Gyulafehérvár, nor the public ear through great open public discussions such as King John had fostered; and even when confirmed in 1576 in the official station of Superintendent of the Unitarian churches, the scope of his authority, as we have seen, was soon narrowly limited. By temperament, however, he seems to have been less interested in the organization and administration of his churches than in the further reform of their doctrine. For only a small part of the whole field of doctrine had as yet been canvased by the Unitarian reformers, in fact, scarcely more than the doctrines of

²³ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, iii, 122, 16; Benkö, *op. cit.*, ii, 226; Peter Bod, *Smirnai Szent Polikárpus* (St. P. of Smyrna), Hermannstadt, 1766, p. 29 f. This apparently unjust restriction was perhaps at first made out of suspicion of the loyalty of the Szeklers who had been followers of Békés. The unwavering constancy of this group, during all the years of their orphanage, is noteworthy.

God, the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, and the nature and office of Christ. No confession had been agreed upon as a comprehensive statement of what they believed, nor could the propositions or theses that Dávid and Biandrata had defended in debate be fairly regarded as representing the general belief, since even these statements, never having been approved or adopted by any synod, had only the authority of individual opinions.

Dávid, however, having an inquisitive mind, was much more inclined to pioneer in fresh fields than to rest content in those already won, and he was open to the stimulating influence of able and independent scholars teaching in the school at Kolozsvár. Of these, Johannes Sommer had been called in 1569 to take the chair vacated by Károli three years before, and he served the Unitarian cause with great ability and energy until four years later, when the plague carried off both his family and him. A yet more striking character was Jacobus Palaeologus, whose previous career in Poland has been related in connection with the history there.²⁴ He seems to have gone from Poland to Constantinople for a visit, and then to have returned to Transylvania and for some time to have been busy with his pen on various theological works; also with lecturing in the Kolozsvár school, where he took an active part in the work of reform. Here he served for a brief period as interim Rector after the death of Sommer, perhaps late in 1572, until the appointment of Hunyadi in 1574,²⁵ and after that he still continued his residence there apparently for several years. In the judgment of Dr. Squarcialupi, one of the court physicians, he was very learned, a great philosopher and theologian, an accomplished debater, acute, daring, persistent and eloquent.²⁶ Before coming to Kolozsvár he had been one of the leaders in the non-adorantist movement in Poland; and according to Socinus he had been the first of all to teach in Poland 'the very wicked and detestable view that Christ should not be adored or invoked.'²⁷ It will be remembered that just before this time this question had been very hotly discussed among the Polish Brethren, and that the majority in Little Poland, following the leadership of Paulus and Czechowicz, had adopted the conservative view, rejecting that of Budny and Palaeologus.²⁸ Knowledge of this controversy will of course have

²⁴ *v. supra*, vol. i, p. 367 n.

²⁵ Cf. Uzoni, i, 464.

²⁶ Cf. his letter to Socinus (1581); Faustus Socinus *Opera Omnia* (in *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*), ii, 359, Irenopoli, 1656.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

²⁸ *v. supra*, vol. i, pp. 367-372.

reached Biandrata, who kept in touch with the brethren in Poland; while at Kolozsvár Palaeologus no doubt found a sympathetic ear in Dávid as he laid before him the view that he had unsuccessfully advocated in Poland.²⁹

The question whether Christ should be invoked in prayer was not an entirely new one in Transylvania. At a general synod held at Rádnoth as early as 1567, when the Unitarian controversy had barely started, Biandrata had a catechism read and given to the public which Paruta had prepared, and which some later said had taught very clearly that only God the Father should be invoked; though Biandrata denied having written in favor of this view.³⁰ The subject had been raised again in 1570 and publicly discussed in the Kolozsvár church in 1572³¹ (perhaps at the time of Neuser's transient sojourn there), but no public stir followed, and any discussion soon quieted down. Also Stephen Basilius, who was one of the associate preachers with Dávid in the great church there, declared that the doctrine was already being preached among the Szeklers in 1575; and in 1576 Benedek Óvári was openly teaching non-adoration at Simánd in Lower Hungary; so that he was appointed to undertake the defence of Dávid before the Prince in 1579.³²

²⁹ A subtle thread seems to connect this doctrinal episode in Poland and Transylvania with the sporadic band of heretics whose experiences at Heidelberg have been related in the previous volume (*v. supra*, vol. i, p. 258 ff). After escaping from prison in the Palatinate, Neuser fled for freedom to Poland, where under guidance of one of the ministers he reached Kraków on the same day as Sommer, also a religious exile, and thence the two went on together to Kolozsvár, where Neuser is said to have made such an impression that when he left, the brethren bought his manuscripts for a considerable sum. Fearing arrest here by spies of the Emperor, he sought refuge at Constantinople, where Palaeologus met him (cf. Lubieniec, *Historia*, pp. 198–200). Neuser claimed to have been the first to urge that Christ should not be invoked in prayer, and his brief stay at Kolozsvár fell at about the time when (so it was said at Dávid's trial) the non-invocation doctrine was first broached there. Glirius (*alias* Vehe), another of the Heidelberg group, was also a teacher at Kolozsvár under or soon after Palaeologus (cf. Possevino, *Transilvania*, pp. 104, 136). The whole of the controversy in both countries may therefore with some show of probability be traced back to Neuser as its fountain-head. Palaeologus, who had thus far been on intimate terms with both Biandrata and Dávid, returned to Poland before the flame burst out at Kolozsvár. For fuller account of Sommer and Palaeologus, cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 456–461.

³⁰ Cf. Sandius, *Bibliotheca*, p. 29; Uzoni, *op. cit.*, i, 258.

³¹ Cf. Uzoni, *op. cit.*, i, 242.

³² A work of Mélius published in 1570 at Debreczen (Az egész Szent Írásból, etc.) shows non-adoration as already current. Cited by Ferencz Kanyaró, 'Krisztus nem-imádás tana 1570 — ben' (Doctrine of the non-adoration of Christ in 1570), *Keresztény Magvető*, xxx (1895), 310; *id.*, *Unitáriusok*, p. 99.

Sommer, finally, in his posthumous *Refutation of Caroli* (1582), asked the question who was to be invoked and adored, and answered, 'Only God the Father who dwells in light inaccessible'; though he did not deny that he was to be invoked and adored through the Son.³³ These instances, however, seem to have been exceptions to the view generally prevailing among the Unitarians. Thus at a synod held at Torda May 15, 1566, and presided over by Biandrata and Dávid, the first in which Unitarian doctrine was clearly expressed, a confession in three articles about the Trinity was adopted, which declared that 'Christ is Lord of all, and thus through him and in his name we have access to the Father, and through him and together with him we invoke the Father, seeing that the Father has given him all things, and he himself bestows all things upon us.'³⁴ Again, the book *De falso et vera Dei cognitione* which Biandrata and Dávid put out in 1567, in the chapter on One God the Father, speaks explicitly of 'Jesus Christ . . . whom we reverence and invoke after the Father, in accordance with his command, and the rule prescribed to us by the Apostles, who invoked him not as the Most High, but as his son.'³⁵ Also in the authorized Unitarian report of the great debate at Gyulafehérvár in 1568, Dávid is recorded as saying to Mélius, 'This man conceived by the Holy Spirit is to be adored since he is not mere man.'³⁶ Finally, in the second of the propositions offered for disputation at Várad, Dávid speaks of Christ as one whom we both adore and reverence and worship.³⁷

It thus seems evident that while there had been, both a few years

³³ Cf. Uzon, *op. cit.*, i, 259.

³⁴ Ideoque per illum et in nomine illius accedimus ad Patrem, et per illum et una cum ipso invocamus patrem, agnoscentes quod Pater omnia illi dederit, et ipse nobis omnia confert. Cf. Uzon, *op. cit.*, i, 376 f, Lampe, *Historia*, p. 147 f, also following the preface of Sommer's book above cited.

³⁵ Quem colimus, et invocamus post Patrem, juxta ipsius praeceptum, et scriptam nobis ab Apostolis regulam, qui illum invocarunt non tanquam Altissimum, sed tanquam illius filium; liber II, caput IV, p. EEIib. The same confession is in Dávid's *Refutatio scripti Petri Meli* (Albae Juliae, 1567), following the preface.

³⁶ Cf. *Brevis enarratio disputationis Albanae* (Albae Juliae, 1568), p. LIib.

³⁷ Quem et adoramus et osculamur et colimus; Lampe, *Historia*, p. 227. A year or two later Dávid would seem, however, still to be wavering on the subject. In his *Az egy Atya Istennec . . . Istenségekről* (Of the deity of the one God the Father) Kolozsvár, 1571, he says (pp. AAa1b, BBbiia, b), Scripture commands us to pray to the Father through Christ . . . It is wrong to pray to the man Christ, because God says, Isa. xliii, that his honor should not be given to another; . . . else we become idolaters . . . The man Christ can not be prayed to, because he is not God in essence, and because he is not God eternal, and not creator of heaven and earth.

before John's death and in the years since, some sporadic and more or less tentative instances in which the invocation of Christ in prayer had been called in question, yet this practice, as the action of the Torda synod and the writings of Dávid and Biandrata had distinctly stated, was still the one generally prevailing and no doubt deeply cherished. For while the Protestant reformers had abandoned the Catholic practice of worshiping the Virgin Mary and invoking the saints, they still continued to adore and invoke Christ as the author of their salvation; and this was deemed the outward sign most sharply marking the distinction between Christianity and Judaism. To abandon or oppose the practice would thus be taken as indicating a relapse into the Jewish religion. Writers on doctrine, notably Socinus, tried indeed to distinguish clearly between adoration and invocation as directed to Christ;⁸⁸ though when Socinus tried to make the difference clear to Niemojewski, by saying that while all Christians are bound to give reverent adoration to Christ as their Lord and Savior, yet they are not bound but only permitted to invoke his aid in prayer, whether directly or as an intercessor with God, yet that one that will not or dare not invoke him scarcely deserves the name of Christian, Niemojewski found the distinction too subtle, since he could perceive little difference.⁸⁹ Undoubtedly in common thought and practice the distinction between the two tended to become blurred yet more, as both being in some sense acts of worship; and it may be doubted whether those engaged in worship often, if ever, stopped in the midst of their devotions to consider whether they were adoring or invoking.

It is evident that soon after the accession of Stephen reports of innovations in the Unitarians' religion began to be heard at court, and in the Diet at Torda in 1572 the Prince reported that some of the pastors were said to be carrying Dávid's faith too far, and denying that it was right to invoke Christ; whereupon it was voted that he be authorized to call the Superintendent and Dávid before him to ascertain whether they were departing from the religion that they held in the time of the late King; and that if so they should be excommunicated or otherwise

⁸⁸ Adorat is qui corpus aut animum reverenter alicui inclinat, et coram eo venerabundus procumbit, etiamsi nihil ab eo petat. Invocat autem is qui, in necessitate constitutus, aut aliquid percipiens, confidenter alienam opem et benignitatem implorat; Socinus, *Opera*, ii, 757, repeated in i, 401; cf. also i, 57-61, and Valentinus Smalcus, *De divinitate Jesu Christi* (Racoviae, 1608), p. 141.

⁸⁹ *Opera*, i, 397-402, 405.

duly punished.⁴⁰ It is not of record what action followed, but the evil was evidently spreading, for further warnings were decreed at the Dicts of 1573, 1576, and 1578, the last especially sharp in its terms.⁴¹ Evidently the orthodox enemies of Dávid's church were keenly on the watch at court for vulnerable points to attack; for to them it was not simply a matter of violating a law, but of spreading a doctrine which, if accepted, would strike at the very heart of the Christian religion.

With the existing background thus understood, we may proceed to the history of the tragic conflict between Biandrata and Dávid.⁴² The germ of the trouble that grew up between these two leaders of the Unitarian churches, Dávid their Superintendent and Biandrata as their chief lay Elder, may be said to be found in the general synod held at Torda in March, 1578, and attended, as already noted, by a number of ministers which surprised them all.⁴³ At this synod they passed a resolution about introducing *communis prophetia* in the church, 'which gave all the ministers liberty without danger to discuss with one another and to investigate matters that have not yet been decided and settled by the

⁴⁰ Cf. *Magyar Emlekek*, II, 422, 528, Benko, *Transsylvania* II, 221 f.

⁴¹ Cf. *Magyar Emlekek*, II, 428, 541, 449, 577, and III, 17, 125.

⁴² The primary source for this episode is the *Defensio Francisci Davidis in negotio de non invocando Jesu Christi in precibus*, said to have been compiled by Palaeologus and Francis Dávid the younger (Socinus, *Opera* II, 709), published first at Basel, where the younger David was a student, 1581, and then at Kolozsvár (?), 1582. It contains the written discussion between David and Biandrata, the judgment of the Polish churches on the writings submitted to them, and a confutation of the same by Palaeologus, in which is inserted a writing addressed to him by brethren in Transylvania who took David's side. This last is passionately partisan and needs to be carefully checked by Socinus's *Epistola Dedicatoria* prefixed to his *De Jesu Christi Invocatione disputatio* (*Opera*, II, 709-712). Later authorities are Miles, *Wuergel* pp. 118-134 (who strangely dates the matter in the time of John Sigismund!), Bod, *Historia* I, 430-435, and Uzon, *Historia* I, 242-255.

⁴³ Partisans of Dávid in writing somewhat later to Palaeologus (*Scriptum Fratrum Transylvanorum*, in *Defensio*, p. 239, also quoted in Bod, *Historia*, I, 436) stated that the occasion of the whole trouble lay in the fact that Biandrata had been guilty of conduct seriously involving his private character, and that he, supposing that this had come to Dávid's knowledge, felt so humiliated that he determined to bring about Dávid's ruin and to this end formed a deep plot to involve him in the crime of innovation. Such a sensational charge, brought forward some three years later by embittered enemies in the course of heated religious controversy, and not supported by any other evidence, is certainly open to suspicion of resting on gossipy rumor rather than on proved fact. But even if the charge be provisionally admitted as true, it is hardly adequate to account for the chain of events that are in question. There were older and far deeper causes at work, for as we have seen, ever since the death of John Sigismund there had been increasing signs foreboding that sooner or later the Unitarian church would have to face the charge of innovation.

general synod, but to which serious consideration might be given . . . in good order and under rules suited to our times.'⁴⁴ A common confession was confirmed; infant baptism was rejected. The purpose of this resolution was to authorize ministers in private circles to discuss unsettled points of doctrine without laying themselves open to prosecution for innovation. Protected, as he thought, by this rule Dávid now began in his own house to raise the questions, in the presence of some others: Whether Christ, since he was not called God by the Apostles, could positively be called God; Whether he could be invoked in prayers; Whether justification and predestination could be believed in in the sense taught by Luther and Calvin; Whether Jesus could have been Christ had he not died.⁴⁵

Two of the Kolozsvár ministers, Demetrius Hunyadi and Stephen Szatmár, who were present reported to Biandrata (whether at his request or spontaneously does not appear), who had thus far been Dávid's friend, about the discussions that he was carrying on; and meanwhile Dávid called another synod at Torda after harvest, 1578. Biandrata therefore, who from his position at court and his intimacy with the Prince was in a position to know what dangers lay in wait for those found to be innovating, wrote Dávid advising him to refrain from taking up at the synod any of the questions that he had been discussing with a few in his own home, lest the Prince be moved to anger and he himself be condemned as an innovator. Dávid heeded the warning as far as the synod was concerned, and when one of the speakers seemed to be going too far, he was silenced.⁴⁶ But having long weighed the subject Dávid had now reached a firm conviction about it; and when a religious doctrine was in question which he deemed vital, he was not the man to maintain silence about it himself for mere reasons of prudence. Moreover, he felt sure not only that he was defending divine truth, but that the recent vote of the synod secured him from harm. He therefore kept on discussing and spreading this subject both privately and from his pulpit, denying that Christ, since he was not God, should be invoked in prayers. Immediately after the synod he also put forth three theses to the same purpose, which were at once reported to Biandrata at the capital. The latter opposed these with thirty of his own, to which Dávid replied with thirty more. All these Dávid now put into print and sent a copy to Békés in Poland, who in happier

⁴⁴ Cf. *Defensio*, p. 229.⁴⁵ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 242 f.⁴⁶ Cf. *Defensio*, p. 231.

days had been his generous patron in Transylvania.⁴⁷ Behind the scenes Biandrata was acutely conscious of the growing danger which might involve in ruin both him and the whole Unitarian cause, and he tried every means to forestall the disaster. He is said even to have proposed to Dávid that three or four of the ministers should be accused and punished by the Prince, that the rest might then be the safer, but this went against Dávid's conscience.⁴⁸ Finally the attempt was made to undermine Dávid's influence by the publication of sixteen theses that purported to represent his views, and stated them in a way calculated to shock any but those that were radical almost to the verge of Judaism; while opposite them were an equal number of antitheses by Biandrata in refutation.⁴⁹ Dávid never acknowledged these theses as his own, indeed he heard of their existence only through others; but they alienated a great many of his followers.

Biandrata, finding in Dávid one so firm in his own convictions and so blind to any danger incurred in spreading them, that he would neither follow well-meant advice, nor listen to reasonable argument, nor recognize the perils that threatened them all, now attempted one more means. Faustus Socinus, who a few years before had won reputation among the liberals at Basel as a thorough scholar and an able debater, had lately followed the footsteps of his uncle Laelius and come to Kraków, as Biandrata will have learned from the leaders of the church there. To him therefore Biandrata wrote, relating the situation at Kolozsvár, and urging him to come and try to convince Dávid of his errors.⁵⁰ He promised to pay all the expenses of his journey and his stay in Transylvania. Socinus accordingly came and, as Biandrata had arranged, was Dávid's paying guest for four months and a half from about the middle of November, hoping that by their mutual conversations Dávid might be brought to change his opinion as to invocation.⁵¹ He also brought Biandrata a letter from the brethren in Poland about the theses that Dávid had sent to Békés, urging that Dávid ought to be excommunicated, as they had done to Budziński two years before for

⁴⁷ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 243.

⁴⁸ Cf. Bod, *Historia*, i, 430.

⁴⁹ Cf. Lampe, *Historia*, pp. 306-311; Bod, *Historia*, i, 431-435.

⁵⁰ Socinus writing some seventeen years later says that Biandrata had summoned him from Basel; but this seems to be a mistake. The time required for a letter to go and Socinus to come would have been too great. Cf. Socinus, *Opera*, ii, 711.

⁵¹ Cf. Socinus, *Opera*, ii, 711 f.

holding the same opinion.⁵² By this letter Biandrata was considerably disturbed, and he was yet more so when Socinus reported to him that he was making no impression on Dávid, who continued to adhere to his view and to declare it openly both to him and to others.⁵³ Dávid however had promised earlier to abide by the decision of the Polish churches if the matter were referred to them, and it was therefore agreed that he should put the main lines of the matter in writing, that Socinus should write in reply, and that both writings should be sent to the Polish brethren; after which the subject should be laid before the General Synod for a decision which should be taken as final. Dávid therefore wrote four theses as follows, and gave them to Socinus:

1. The strict command of God is that no one is to be invoked save God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth.
2. Christ, the teacher of truth, taught that no one is to be invoked beside the heavenly Father.
3. True invocation is defined as that which is paid to the Father in spirit and in truth.
4. The forms of simple prayer are directed not to Christ but to the Father.⁵⁴

Socinus then refuted these theses at length; and Dávid confuted the refutation at greater length yet.⁵⁵ These pieces, together with the theses that Biandrata had previously offered in opposition to those of Dávid, and some other writings, were eventually sent by Biandrata and Socinus to the Polish brethren with a request for their judgment.

There seems, however, to have been considerable delay in preparing these writings, for they were not despatched from Gyulafehérvár until June 17.⁵⁶ In the meantime the oral discussions between Dávid and

⁵² Uzoni mentions Budny also; but his excommunication was largely for other views, and did not occur until six years later. *v. supra*, vol. i, p. 372; cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 244, 258.

⁵³ Uzoni, i, 244, relays a story that Biandrata now tried to get Dávid removed from his office as chief pastor of the Kolozsvár church, and that when reproached for this he threatened to have Dávid condemned as an innovator at a Diet to be held at Kolozsvár at Martinmas. But the story does not hang together well. Socinus declared that no such Diet was held at all, and the official records mention none. Cf. Socinus, *Opera*, ii, 710.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Defensio*, p. 3; Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 244.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Defensio*, pp. 4-23, 23-120.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Defensio*, p. 124.

Socinus continued with increasing warmth, and with no approach to agreement, as long as Socinus remained Dávid's guest; and the written discussion was not finished until May.⁵⁷ Dávid, however, was not content to have the affairs of the churches remain at a standstill while the doctrinal question was undecided, and impatient of the delay he had called a synod at Torda for February 24, 1579. At this Biandrata took great offence, and he strove to prevent the meeting until the answer should be received from Poland. Dávid however insisted that it was necessary to ordain ministers and to correct moral abuses among the clergy, and the synod was held. But Dávid went further at the synod than he had intimated to Biandrata, and among the ten articles adopted were two maintaining that to purify old doctrines from error and superstition is not innovation, and that a natural consequence of belief in the one God is the doctrine that he alone should be worshiped.⁵⁸ This action angered and alarmed Biandrata when he learned of it, as violating their understanding that the disputed question was to be held in abeyance until the Polish churches had rendered their opinion and a general synod had settled the controversy. It also changed the relations between Biandrata and Dávid from those of comrades in disagreement to those of enemies in open hostility to each other. Dávid, however, full of self confidence now that the synod had supported his view, brought up the subject on the following Sunday in his sermon in the great church,⁵⁹ boldly declaring that invoking Christ in prayers was no better than the Catholic practice of worshiping the Virgin Mary or the dead saints. This must have roused considerable commotion among those of the congregation that were still accustomed to offer prayers to Christ, for the accounts make it evident that from the beginning of the controversy all the Kolozsvár clergy but one had been more or less out of sympathy with Dávid on this matter.⁶⁰ Biandrata now, while passing near Kolozsvár on a journey to Várad, sought a conference with five of them and revealed to them his plan of action, at the same time sending word to Dávid that he had now declared himself to the

⁵⁷ Absoluta est haec de Jesu Christi invocatione Disputatio anno ipsius Christi nati 1579 mense Maio Claudiopoli in Transylvania, Socinus, *Opera*, II, 766

⁵⁸ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, I, 245

⁵⁹ Cf. Socinus, *Opera*, II, 711

⁶⁰ Several times mentioned in this connection are Demetrius Hunyadi, who was soon to succeed Dávid as Superintendent, Stephen Szatmár, Stephen Basilus, and Johannes Eppel. Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, I, 337

Prince as Dávid's open enemy.⁶¹ He had reported the whole situation to the Prince, who as soon as he learned what Dávid was now teaching wrote to the city Council at Kolozsvár, ordering that Dávid be forbidden to exercise his office as preacher until otherwise ordered, and be kept under guard in his house and be allowed to see no one.⁶²

Before the Prince's orders were put in force by the Council, Dávid, after at first hesitating, decided to follow the advice of his son-in-law, Lucas Trauzner, who was Secretary of the Council, and to enter the pulpit on the Sunday just at hand. He therefore preached in both the large (Hungarian) and the smaller (Saxon) church in the public square, and told the people plainly the reason why he was to be arrested, and concluded by declaring, 'Whatever the world may yet try to do, it will nevertheless become clear to the whole world that God is one.' It was the last sermon he ever preached. On the next day there was a crowded meeting of the Council where the communication from the Prince was received. Quite at a loss what to do in so unusual a case, they sent a delegation of their leading members to intercede with the Prince lest he inflict disgrace on their great Pastor; but he was inexorable. Witnesses were summoned, a searching inquiry was made, and the leading men of the church were examined as to Dávid's sermon. A provincial meeting of the Diet was appointed at Torda on April 24, and Dávid was ordered to appear. His friends were there in great number; but he bade them raise no disturbance, remembering that on a previous occasion a number of their number had been put to death for turbulence. They merely urged the Prince not to take too hasty action, while Dávid's opponents, fearing that he might be set at liberty, urged immediate severity.⁶³ But the Prince took note of the threatening attitude of the nobles, who had gathered from a district very largely Unitarian, and fearing an uprising he prudently adjourned the matter to the general Diet to be held at his capital at the beginning of June. Dávid was returned to Kolozsvár, and for the intervening month was placed under closer guard than ever.

⁶¹ Legend later magnified this conference into a synod of fifty ministers convoked by Biandrata, and made Socinus a participant in it; which Socinus flatly denied. Cf. *Defensio*, p. 244; Bod, *Historia*, I, 438; Socinus, *Opera*, II, 710 f.

⁶² Cf. *Defensio*, p. 244 f.

⁶³ It was later reported that Socinus was one of these, but he denied this, saying that he did not go to Torda at all, being at the time ill at Kolozsvár. Cf. *Defensio*, p. 249; Bod, *Historia*, I, 440; Socinus, *Opera*, II, 710.

In the interval, the long disputation that Dávid and Socinus had been having orally was finally reduced to written form by some time in May,⁶⁴ and was forwarded by Biandrata to the brethren in Poland. The corrected text as published by Socinus sixteen years later fills fifty-four double column pages of fine print.⁶⁵ The discussion is carried on earnestly but in good spirit. It is strictly scriptural, and turns on the interpretation and application of scripture passages, arguing from what they teach or seem to imply or involve; and it runs out into great detail which it would be profitless to try to report. In brief, Dávid insisted on strict observance of the Old Testament command that no one should be worshiped but God (Deut vi, 13; Matt. iv, 10), and held that no command to the contrary had ever been given; while Socinus held that, though we are not bound to do so, yet we may properly invoke Christ, and he appealed to such texts as Matt xxviii, 18, John v, 22 f, Acts vii, 59, Phil. ii, 9 f, to show that the words of Jesus and the practice of the Apostles sanctioned such invocation. To the popular mind it seemed to be the question whether in worship one should follow Christian tradition or Jewish. Upon receipt of the papers in the case the Polish churches met after harvest in a synod at Bełżyce. Gregory Paulus presided, and the whole session was given over to the question. The judgment was not difficult for them to arrive at, for the question had lately been thoroughly canvassed in the controversy with the Lithuanian radicals,⁶⁶ as Biandrata doubtless knew when he proposed submission of the matter to the Polish brethren. Judgment was voted in favor of the view of Socinus that the Lord Christ should be invoked. Alexander Witrelin was authorized in the name of all the ministers to write out the judgment and forward it to the brethren in Transylvania, where it was published before the end of the year.⁶⁷ The decision so long awaited came too late to have any effect upon the case of Dávid; for when the

⁶⁴ *v supra*, p 72

⁶⁵ Cf *Defensio*, pp 3-120, Socinus, *Opera*, II, 713-766. See further pp 767-803 containing Socinus's later disputation with Christian Francken on the same subject, and further items of the discussion with Dávid.

⁶⁶ *v supra*, vol I, pp 367-370

⁶⁷ *Judicium ecclesiarum Polonicarum de causa Francisci Davidis in quaestione de vera hominis Jesu Christi filii Dei viventis invocatione* (Claudiopoli, 1579). Dated Bełżyce, August 24, 1579, signed by Witrelin (*Defensio*, p. 200). It is not only the decision of the Polish brethren, for it gives at great length the argument from Scripture on which it is based, *Defensio*, pp 121-219, followed by an even more elaborate *Confutatio* by Palaeologus, pp 220-408. Cf *Reformacja w Polsce* (Kraków), VII (1936), 30.

matter was taken in hand by the Diet in April the question at issue was already no longer whether Dávid's teaching was true or scriptural, but simply whether it constituted an innovation going beyond the teaching accepted in the time of King John, and this issue had been decided against him at the Diet nearly two months before the Polish synod met.

After returning to Kolozsvár from the Diet at Torda, Dávid had a severe attack of what was known as 'colic' (from which he had been suffering for some time even before his arrest), insomuch that he could scarcely speak; and as the date of the Diet approached he hardly had strength to move hand or foot, and was placed in his carriage in what seemed to be a dying condition.⁶⁸ Almost the whole city followed him to the gate with tears and heard his parting farewell. On the first day he reached Torda, but so shaken up by the journey and the inclement weather that he was not expected to survive the night. On the third day they arrived at Gyulafehérvár. Accompanied by his son-in-law Lucas⁶⁹ and by an armed guard he was at once taken into the great hall of the palace where the Diet was meeting. A great crowd had gathered; but weak as he was Dávid had to stand until the Prince took pity and had a chair brought for him.

Christopher Báthory presided, flanked on either side by the officers of the court and then by a large number of the nobility who had been summoned to judge the case. Facing him on the one hand were the accusers headed by Biandrata, on the other the trinitarian Hungarians and the Saxon pastors, and crowded between the two were Dávid, his son-in-law and his guards. The case was formally opened by the Chancellor, Alexander Kendi, speaking in the name of the Prince. Biandrata then began the prosecution, professing great regret at having to take this step, which he had for a year tried to avoid by warning

⁶⁸ The sources for the account of Dávid's trial now to follow are *Defensio*, pp. 251-273; reprinted in Bod, *Historia*, i, 441-450; Miles, *Wüngengel*, pp. 122-131; Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 248-253; *Magyar Emlékek*, iii, 22-29.

⁶⁹ Lucas Trauzner stood loyally by his father-in-law to the end of the trial, and narrowly missed having to share his sentence, but he managed to escape and fled to Baranya County beyond the Danube, where he was safe under the Turkish government. He there practiced his profession as a lawyer, but after 24 years he ventured in 1604 to return to Transylvania, when he was arrested and imprisoned for seven months at Déva. Upon professing to accept the Catholic faith he won Basta's indulgence and was released. He then returned to Kolozsvár and resumed the practice of his profession. Having presumably renounced the Catholic faith he finally became counselor and presiding judge under Prince Sigismund Rákóczi in 1607. Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 627.

Dávid to refrain from innovation; but as Dávid would not listen to warnings he was forced to do this in order to save the church from greater injury. The Chancellor then, after reciting the things that had been credibly reported to the Prince by Dávid's followers about his teachings, asked him whether he confessed to having said: 1, that Christ was not to be invoked in prayers; 2, that those that invoke Christ sin as much as those that invoke the Virgin Mary, the Apostles and other dead saints; 3, that certain writings in evidence were his own. Lucas was permitted to answer for him that he admitted any writings that were really his own, but not those that were being falsely circulated as his; but that the writings were not now in question, for they were still pending until the Polish churches had given their judgment. But as to the first question he had preached that no divine worship not commanded by the word of God can be acceptable to God, and the invocation of Christ is not so commanded. As to the third, he held that invocation of the saints can be practiced by the same warrant as that of Christ. The inquiry of the Prince, however, is not whether the teachings are true or not, but whether they are new.

Biandrata taunted Dávid with returning to Judaism, and Dávid replied that Biandrata himself had a few years before been of the same opinion. Biandrata denied this, but said that if he had happened to say anything of the sort he now retracted it, and he advised Dávid to do the same. He then urged that Dávid's theses be read; but Lucas objected that on a question of newness of doctrine they were nothing to the point. In the angry colloquy that followed, Biandrata lost his temper and resorted to threats. The defence then asked that in view of Dávid's illness the case be adjourned to the next day, and despite strong opposition from the prosecution the request was granted; after which Dávid's friends in the ministry and among the nobility took counsel how to proceed, though urged by him to be careful for his sake not to give any offence. When the trial was resumed the next morning, Dávid was so weak that he had to be carried into the session in a chair. Allowed now to defend himself, he introduced in evidence various printed and written works showing that as long as five or even eight years ago, before any edict about innovation, Biandrata and others had opposed the invocation of Christ, and to this Biandrata made but a feeble reply. When the defence was finished Dávid and his friends were allowed to withdraw while the case was deliberated, though at the

Prince's desire the accusers were permitted to remain, as necessary to an understanding of the situation in the church. Deliberation lasted for an hour and a half. Biandrata and some twenty-five of his party solemnly swore that they had never held Dávid's view, and that it was new and blasphemous. A single one of the trinitarian Hungarians dissented, saying that it had been publicly expressed at the Várad disputation. The Saxons refused to express an opinion, while the nobles of Dávid's party declared their adherence to his view rather than subscribe to worshipping Christ as God.

When Dávid and his companions were called back into the hall to hear the decision, Biandrata gave Dávid a Judas embrace, bade him be of good courage and promised his intercession, while his fellow-accusers begged the Prince to spare his life. One of the Calvinist ministers present, on the other hand, made a long address to the Prince urging the death penalty, appealing to the law of Moses that a false prophet should not be suffered to live, and threatening him with the wrath of God if he failed in his duty.⁷⁰ It was the trial of Christ before Pilate reenacted in all its essential details, even to the 'Crucify him.' The Prince was visibly impressed, and gave assurance through the Chancellor that he would see to it that so great a crime should not go unpunished. Dávid was then told that the Prince would decide what punishment for his blasphemy and innovation should be inflicted as a warning to others, and that meantime he should be held in custody. He was then led away by soldiers and allowed to see no one.⁷¹ Three days later, condemned to perpetual imprisonment, he was taken away to Déva, some thirty or forty miles to the south west, and imprisoned in the castle dungeon on the summit of a high hill overlooking the valley of the Maros. His last days are shrouded in darkness. The legends usual in such cases became current about Dávid, how he fell into insane frenzy, was haunted by demons, and the like,⁷² but all that is authentically known is that, though wasted by his long illness, he survived for over five months, and died probably on November 15, 1579. The place of his burial no man knoweth unto this day.⁷³

⁷⁰ Cf. *Defensio*, p. 271 f, Bod, *Historia*, 1, 450, Socinus, *Opera*, II, 538.

⁷¹ Uzoni, *Historia*, 1, 250, gives the date as June 2, 1579.

⁷² Cf. *Epistolae et Acta*, 1, 186.

⁷³ Cf. Socinus, *loc. cit.*, Uzoni, *Historia*, 1, 252-260. In 1901 a memorial to Dávid was erected by Unitarians of Europe and America within the ruined walls of the castle at Déva, but it was later destroyed at the time of the Romanian occupation.

The trial of Francis Dávid and judgment upon the persons connected with it have been the subject of warm controversy for more than three centuries and a half; but it ought now to be possible to sift and weigh the conflicting evidence and to form judgments without being unduly swayed by prepossessions or prejudice as to the persons involved. As to the main question at issue in the trial, whether Dávid was or was not committing an innovation in 1578 when he brought forward the doctrine of non-invocation of Christ in prayers, it seems clear that while it can not be maintained that this was until then an unheard-of doctrine, since various instances were adduced to prove the contrary, still it had never been formally adopted or even generally accepted; and the fact that Dávid thought it so important to bring it forward and emphasize it when he did is in itself an indication that even if not quite unknown it had at all events lain dormant. It is this view of the facts that was apparently taken by the judges at the Diet, in a trial that seems on the whole to have been fairly conducted; although it is evident that they were much swayed by the fact that the doctrine of Dávid in itself seemed execrable blasphemy. But as to the doctrine that Dávid was here defending, the modern man's sympathies are naturally with him. The arguments by which he supports it are plain, straightforward and scriptural, while those of Socinus are obscure, involved and traditional. As between the two, the history of liberal Protestantism, at least, has long since given its verdict for Dávid, for its customs of worship to-day show but faint relics of the invocation of Christ.

In judging a case that presently developed, or degenerated, into a personal contest between the two who for a dozen years or more had harmoniously worked together in promoting the Unitarian movement in Transylvania, it is next to impossible to refrain from taking sides, and sympathy naturally goes to Dávid as the suffering party. In his behalf it must be said that he had long devoted himself to building up a church whose beliefs should conform strictly to Scripture; and after purging it of the two central doctrines of the Trinity and the deity of Christ as not meeting this standard, he was now concerned to extend reform to other doctrines. He had become clearly convinced that the next step to be taken related to the current practice of addressing worship to Christ. Once quite clear on this point, his eager nature was impatient of any delay in proceeding to it. Nor could he conceive that teaching a doctrine so plainly scriptural could, when it had already been

broached, possibly violate a law of the land, now that it had the support of his synod. This conviction blinded him to the dangers that Biandrata saw gathering; and he doubtless resented it that in what was his own province as responsible head of the churches, a layman even though he were an Elder should presume to interfere and direct him as to what he should do. If, as was later rumored, relations between him and Biandrata were on other grounds already strained, it was the easier for Biandrata to regard Dávid's persistence as a matter of personal stubbornness. If, on the other hand, Biandrata, living at a court where the dominant feeling was actively hostile to Unitarians, saw signs of a gathering storm which, if it were allowed to burst, might overwhelm the church, he was bound to take any measures necessary to prevent such a catastrophe. It was a situation in which Dávid on the one hand could not postpone the sacred cause of reform in the church for fear of a danger which might be only imaginary, and in which Biandrata on the other could not retreat without imperiling the very existence of the church. It may be doubted, however, whether his interest in the reform of doctrine had ever gone much beyond that already achieved.

With the issue thus defined, Biandrata had no alternative but to smother the alleged innovation at whatever cost; and if from this point on his attitude changed from that of a fraternal critic to that of an active enemy, who resorted to whatever means were necessary to accomplish his end, his course, however regrettable, is at least easy to understand. If Dávid should be ruined in the process, he will have brought upon his own head a disaster which he had been abundantly warned to avoid. But it is not necessary to accept the interpretation afterwards made by Biandrata's enemies, that from the beginning he was only carrying out for personal reasons a deep-laid diabolical plot to undermine his rival. This was indeed the interpretation of the case published two years later in the *Defensio Francisci Davidis*, which has strongly influenced judgments in Transylvania to this day, and causes Biandrata to be spoken of only with loathing, and Socinus with only grudging respect, as one whom he used as a tool to achieve his ends. It was not until some fifteen years later that Socinus was able at length to publish his *apologia* and to vindicate himself from the charge of having played an unworthy rôle in the drama of Dávid's ruin.⁷⁴ Though

⁷⁴ His *apologia* is found in the *Epistola Dedicatoria* prefixed to his writing, *De Jesu Christi Invocatione*, which denies various false charges or misstatements in the *Defensio*.

his associations were naturally with those that approved invocation, his part is shown to have been merely to try by calm argument to persuade Dávid that his view was erroneous. While he attended the trial at Gyulafehérvár by written invitation of the Prince, he took no part in the proceedings there. He seems not to have returned to Poland until 1580, when an epidemic of 'colic' threatened his health in Transylvania.⁷⁵

Socinus urged Biandrata to publish a confutation of the latter as soon as it appeared, but nothing came of it. He then urged the Polish Brethren to publish a reply; but when they learned that he had written that there is no express command about invoking Christ, and that though we may invoke him yet we are not bound to do so, they took offence and would not publish his work. As others still urged publication it was finally done in 1595 at the expense of a friend. Cf. Socinus, *Opera*, ii, 709 f; Robert Spears, 'Faustus Socinus and Francis Dávid,' *Monthly Repository of Theology* (London), xiii (1818), 382-385.

⁷⁵ Cf. Socinus, *loc. cit.*

CHAPTER VI

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH UNDER THE BÁTHORYS, 1579-1599

WHILE DAVID'S BODY LAY mouldering in its unknown or forgotten grave, his spirit continued to live on in the church of his followers. From having been its inspiring leader in the days when it was sweeping all before it, he now became transformed into its sanctified martyr, the personal incarnation of its faith, and the symbol of a heroic devotion to conviction which was to furnish it with inspiration and strength to endure long generations of persecution yet to come. Before we take leave of him it will be well to review the faith that was his bequest to the church that he founded. Dávid early became convinced that the reformation of Christian doctrine, if it were to be faithful to Scripture, needed to go much further than the first Protestant reformers had attempted. Moving in this direction after his break with the Calvinists he was at first strongly influenced by Servetus in his criticism of the doctrine of the Trinity and of the person of Christ, as also somewhat by the writings of Gentile and Ochino. But in his independent studies of Scripture he rapidly outgrew these; and taking this as his sole authority he noted how much that was solely of human origin the reformers had retained in their creeds. He never did, in fact, elaborate a fully rounded system of belief, but by 1567 he published the first and most important part of it.¹ In stating his reformed beliefs Dávid at first moved carefully, desiring if possible to avoid dividing the church on doctrinal lines. The first step was taken at the synod at Maros-Vásárhely in 1566, in a decisive stand for the Apostles' Creed as an authoritative and sufficient expression of scripture teaching; but later in the same year a *Catechismus Ecclesiarum* was approved which, after the first fifteen questions and answers, was identical

¹ *Rövid magyarázat miképpen az Antichristus az igaz istenről való tudományt meghomályosította*, etc. (Brief exposition of how the Antichrist has obscured the true knowledge of God), Albae Juliae, 1567. Facsimile reprint, Kolozsvár, 1910, with appendix on the theology of Francis Dávid, by George Boros.

with the Heidelberg Catechism. Though rejecting the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity it still retained a doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Dávid soon, however, centered his emphasis upon the unqualified unity of God as the first and greatest idea in religion; and 'God is one' (*Egy az Isten*) was taken up and has ever since remained as the watch word and rallying cry of the Unitarian churches in Transylvania. He conceived of God as a spiritual being, whose power is manifested in Nature, and whose goodness, wisdom, love and omniscience are everywhere apparent. His love for man is most fully shown in the person of Jesus, who was the promised Messiah, and was conceived by the Holy Spirit, though incontestably a human being, and divine only in the sense that he was the Son of God and that upon him God conferred especial dignity. He was sent of God, endowed by his spirit, and appointed to be judge of the quick and the dead, became our teacher, prophet, priest and King, and was at length seated at the right hand of God. Through him we have been enlightened and sanctified, and through repentance and faith in him we are saved.² Into other doctrines Dávid did not go to any extent. To matters of organization and the ceremonies of the church he attached little importance, believing them largely superfluous; since those that heed the teaching of Scripture and follow the example of Jesus will not go astray. Infant baptism was rejected as unscriptural, and the Lord's Supper though retained evidently did not greatly appeal to him, being but an outward rite which in the Roman Church had been exaggerated far beyond its original meaning.

Had Dávid lived, his active mind would undoubtedly have proceeded much further in the reconstruction of religious belief. The question of the invocation of Christ was indeed but a prelude to others to be taken up when the time proved ripe and the minds of the people had been prepared for further steps. Already in 1578 he was revolving the doctrines of justification and predestination taught by Luther and Calvin as calling for attention.³ It may be presumed therefore that had his

² Dávid's teaching about Jesus is most fully given in his *Rovid Útmutatas*, and in the Confession which he offered near the end of his life at the time of his preliminary trial before the Diet at Torda in April, 1579. Cf. Johannes Sommerus, *Refutatio scripti Petri Caroli* (Ingolstadt, 1582), following the preface, also in Uzoni, *Historia*, I, 247 f. See also Boros's essay appended to *Rovid magyarazat* cited above.

³ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, I, 243, v. *supra*, p. 69.

course not been interrupted he might have carried through a thorough revision of the whole existing system of Christian doctrine, and have left his followers a Confession much more independent of the accretions of tradition, and much more consistent with Scripture, than were those of the great reformers. Even as it was, he went further, and showed himself much freer and more fearless in his teaching, than the Polish Brethren, whose progress had been hindered by the long controversy over baptism, and by the bitter one between tritheists, ditheists and unitarians. But unfortunately, with the removal of Dávid, and the determination of the civil power to resist any further changes in doctrine, the Unitarians of Transylvania were forced into practical doctrinal stagnation for over two centuries. Leadership in this field passed to Faustus Socinus, whose system as elaborated in the Racovian Catechism was accepted also by the Transylvanians as their standard of faith.

If the tragic death of Dávid, as we have said, was eventually to be a perpetual source of inspiration and strength to his followers, by holding up before them an example of unwavering fidelity to their religion, its immediate effect was nevertheless devastating, as they found themselves stunned and bewildered, and their leader dishonored and disgraced. Large numbers of both the common people and the magnates who had of late flocked to his cause now fell away from it or were deterred from joining it. Yet on the other hand, as the next generation was to make evident, there were still many in Transylvania that sympathized with the views for which he had been condemned, though bound for the present not to avow them publicly. Sympathy with Dávid was especially pronounced in the churches of Lower Hungary which, being under the Turkish rule, were free from the influences that swayed Christopher Báthory. These churches had multiplied and flourished vigorously on both sides of the Danube since the early mission of Basilus; and the Lutheran chaplain, Stephen Gerlach, passing through on his way to Constantinople, as early as 1573, reported finding many 'Arians' along the middle Danube.⁴ In this territory, as in Transylvania, public disputations with the Calvinists were held as usual. Of these the most celebrated was in 1574 at Nagy Harsany, where the two preachers championing the Unitarian cause were persecuted for their heresy under the old Hungarian law. Lukas Tolnai managed to escape, but his companion George Alvinczi was condemned to

⁴ Cf. Kanyaro, *Unitáriusok*, p. 115.

death and hanged by order of the Calvinist Bishop.⁵ Upon this a wealthy Unitarian at the risk of his life brought the matter to the attention of the Turkish Governor at Buda and demanded satisfaction. The Governor gave ear, and ordered the Calvinist Bishop to appear. A new disputation was ordered and was held before a great crowd. The Governor gave judgment that the execution of Alvinczi had been inhuman, and the Bishop and his two fellows were sentenced to death as murderers. The Calvinists were thunder-struck; but the Unitarian preacher at Pécs interceded for them, saying that his people did not seek revenge. The sentence was therefore remitted, and in lieu of it a heavy annual tribute was imposed on the whole province. Another famous discussion was held at Pécs in 1588 between the Calvinist Matthew Skaricza of Tolna and George Valaszuti of Pécs, which was carried on in amicable fashion and resulted in better understanding.⁶

After this the Unitarians, who now had more than threescore congregations in the two counties of Temes and Baranya, lived in peace for the rest of the century. They had followed the case of Dávid with deepest concern, and immediately upon receiving word of his death at Déva Pál Kárádi, Pastor at Temesvár, addressed to Demetrius Hunyadi who had succeeded Dávid as Superintendent, and to three other ministers at Kolozsvár who with him had been active opponents of Dávid, a long letter⁷ in which, after saluting them as 'brethren of Judas Iscariot,' he covered them with maledictions and reproaches, charging them with treachery to an innocent man, conspirators with the infamous Biandrata, murderers and brethren of Cain. To this letter Stephen Basilus, one of the addressees, wrote a dignified reply, as also one to Benedek Ovári, who had for several years been teaching non adoration in Lower Hungary.⁸ From this time on the churches in Lower Hungary drew more and more apart from those in Transylvania. Basilus, indeed, whom we have seen active in the early spread of the faith in Hungary, exerted himself to prevent a separation, and

⁵ Cf. Lampe, *Historia* p. 671, Kanyaro, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

⁶ Cf. Miklós Jankovich, *A Socinianusok eredetéről Magyarországon* (The beginning of the Socinians in Hungary), Pest, 1829, Kanyaró, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-185.

⁷ Kárádi's letter was dated Nov. 9, while Dávid died Nov. 15. If the date of the letter is taken as Old Style, which was still prevalent in Turkish dominions, it could fall four days after the other date. As Temesvár was only some 75 miles west of Déva, there was sufficient time for the news to pass. Text in Uzoni, *Historia* 1, 260-264.

⁸ Both letters in Uzoni, *op. cit.*, 1, 270 ff.

visited the ministers and churches to that end, but with no success, since at present they preferred an independent course, and Basilius found them in 1580 full of what he called 'judaizing notions.' They therefore chose a Superintendent of their own in Kárádi, who became known as 'Bishop of the Alföld' (i.e., the Great Plain of Lower Hungary, east of the Danube). His diocese had more than sixty churches, all under Turkish rule, and he also had oversight of the churches in Baranya County west of the Danube. In their detachment from the brethren in Transylvania these churches were bound to suffer; but when Kárádi died about 1600 the wound had begun to heal, and no new Superintendent was chosen. Henceforth they seem to have had no efficient organization, and extant records of them are scanty;⁹ but as late as the beginning of the eighteenth century Unitarianism was still vigorous and widespread in lower Baranya County. In 1628, however, came the plague to devastate the country, and in the following year a Jesuit mission began operations and won many converts. As the Turkish power waned late in the century, Catholicism under the patronage of the Emperor made corresponding gains, and churches were taken from the Unitarians and given to them, and the Unitarian ministers were banished, so that by the end of the century Pécs, which two generations before had been nearly all Unitarian, had become Catholic again. The Emperor Leopold rid the country of Turkish rule 1683-88, and a quarter of a century of violent persecution by the Catholic government ensued. Yet as late as 1710 the surviving Unitarian congregations were still sending to Transylvania for ministers. By the middle of the century, however, the inevitable fate overtook them. They were a hopeless and dwindling minority surrounded by Catholics and Calvinists, both bitterly hostile to them, the relatively tolerant government of the Turks was at an end, the churches in lower Hungary became extinct and their few remaining members were absorbed among Catholics or Calvinists.¹⁰ It was not until late in the nineteenth century that Unitarian churches began again to be established in Hungary.

We return now to the situation at Gyulafehérvár after the imprisonment of Dávid. With the Superintendent of the Unitarian churches removed from the scene, it developed upon Biandrata as their most prominent lay Elder to gather together and reorganize the demoralized

⁹ Cf. Kanyaró, *Unitáriusok*, pp. 104-108.

¹⁰ Cf. Kanyaró, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-210.

congregations. He acted with promptness and decision. All the ministers that had followed Dávid at his trial were at once summoned before the Prince and threatened with the same punishment as Dávid unless they abjured his opinions. The nobles asked that they be given a day for consultation, which was granted; but lest any escape their names were recorded and the gates were guarded. When again summoned to the palace on the following morning they yielded to the inevitable, disowned sympathy with Dávid's opinions, and were permitted to return to their homes. A month later Biandrata convened a general synod at Kolozsvár, which was attended by nearly all the ministers. He reminded them of their promise to the Prince, and induced them (by false representations, it was afterwards asserted) to subscribe a doctrinal statement supposed to have been compiled out of books published in the time of King John. This consisted of four articles, affirming their faith as to the divinity, adoration, invocation and kingdom of Christ.¹¹ Twenty-four of their number were elected as a Consistory; but when it came to the election of a new Superintendent there was such general objection to Demetrius Hunyadi to whom Biandrata had promised the office that no election was had. Nevertheless, Biandrata took Hunyadi with him to Gyulafehérvár and recommended him to the Prince in the name of the churches, whereupon he was confirmed by the Prince as Superintendent in place of Dávid, and the city Council at Kolozsvár had also to accept him as their chief Pastor.¹²

At this synod, in the interest of good order, regulations were adopted forbidding either public or private debate on controversial questions, or pulpit discussion of useless questions calculated to disturb the common people, and charging ministers rather to urge their hearers to good works. The Lord's Prayer was to be retained in public worship before the sermon, and a scriptural benediction was to conclude the service. Ministers were not to change their posts without consent of the Superintendent and the Consistory, and the two were to join in proposing a brief plan for a complete reform of the churches. The Lord's Supper and infant baptism, which had more or less fallen into

¹¹ Text in Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 276 f; Jakab, *Dávid*, Appendix, p. 22 f; Robert Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography* (London, 1850), iii, 556 f; cf. *Defensio*, p. 275; Bod, *Historia*, i, 451.

¹² Cf. Bod, *Historia*, i, 451 f.

disuse, were ordered restored. Ministers who failed to attend synods were to be fined, and if contumacious were to be removed from office.¹³

It is evident that under Dávid's loose administration the customs and usages in individual congregations had fallen into disorder, and loudly called for reform and stricter control; for in October of the same year the Diet at Torda reported that innovation was continuing in the land, and voted that the innovators be punished.¹⁴ In the face of such conditions the new Superintendent proved to be a wise and judicious administrator, and in his thirteen years' service he succeeded in bringing the churches into established and wholesome good order.

Hunyadi, though the second Superintendent of the Unitarian churches, was their first real administrator, and he was well chosen for his task. As a student in the college at Kolozsvár he had early showed distinguished talents, and was made an assistant teacher. From here he was promoted to be Rector of the school at Enyed, where he won a high reputation. At a disputation in the great debate at Gyulafehérvár in 1566 he so attracted the attention of King John that he was sent abroad for further study, and spent six years at Padua, being a fellow-student with Stephen Báthory and several others who later stood high in public life. Returning home in 1573 he was at once appointed Rector of the college at Kolozsvár, the first native Unitarian to hold this position, for hitherto Biandrata and Dávid had been obliged to go abroad for competent Rectors. He was distinguished as a Greek scholar, and served his office with great credit as long as Dávid lived. As Superintendent he now convened annual synods, constantly aiming to bring about better organization of the churches, and he especially advocated the religious education of their children, which had of late been much neglected.¹⁵ He also divided the churches into twelve districts, each under the charge of a Dean or District Superintendent (*Esperes*). With the Jesuits, who in his time were beginning to extend their work into Transylvania, he had numerous debates. In his office he had a very difficult rôle to fill, for he had succeeded a leader idolized by his people, and as he was placed in office not by free choice of the people but under pressure from above, he never became popular with them; while the fact that he had sided with Biandrata and had been favored by

¹³ Cf. Jakab, *Dávid*, p. 241, and Appendix, p. 23.

¹⁴ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, iii, 142; Jakab, *Dávid*, p. 241.

¹⁵ Cf. Bod, *Historia*, i, 456.

him brought upon him the charge that he had joined with him in a wicked conspiracy against Dávid. He had therefore for a time to suffer a share of the obloquy that covered the former. Yet as he was by temperament evidently conservative, there is no good reason for doubting that he honestly disapproved Dávid's action in promoting more radical views, nor for believing that out of ambition or otherwise he allowed himself to be made Biandrata's mere tool. After serving for just less than thirteen years as Superintendent he was stricken with apoplexy while preaching in the great church at Kolozsvár, and two days later he expired¹⁶

In the autumn after Dávid's trial the judgment of the Polish churches, to which the arguments between Dávid and Biandrata had been submitted, was received.¹⁷ As already related, the decision was strongly against Dávid's position, and was supported by lengthy arguments from Scripture. The judgment was of course too late to have the least effect upon Dávid's case, which had been determined by the Diet in June; though Biandrata doubtless felt that it might have considerable moral effect with the churches, and make them more reconciled to what had been done. He therefore laid the document before the Consistory at its November meeting at Kolozsvár, charging the members under serious threats to subscribe to it. A few subscribed at once, several refused, and the matter was adjourned to the general synod, by which time all had had opportunity to read it in print. At this meeting held at Kolozsvár in January, 1580 the subject was again brought up, and now out of 250 ministers present all subscribed but sixteen or eighteen, who were therefore forbidden to preach until their case should be dealt with at a later synod. Thus a nominal conformity was at length secured, which furnished at least some assurance against further prosecution for innovation, though how sincere the conformity was which was thus secured must in many cases have been open to grave doubt. The long letter that in this year or the next was written to Palaeologus in the name of the 'Transylvania brethren,'¹⁸ passionately defending Dávid's side, shows clearly that beneath a quiet surface there was a suppressed fever of discontent. In fact, a contemporary witness reports that many

¹⁶ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, 1, 274-284, 468 f.

¹⁷ *Judicium ecclesiarum Polonicarum. v. supra*, p. 74. Cf. *Defensio*, p. 277 f, Bod, *Historia*, 1, 452.

¹⁸ Cf. *Defensio*, pp. 236-278

of the nobles still held and supported Dávid's view,¹⁹ while a number of the best ministers of the church now left Transylvania for the greater freedom to be enjoyed in Hungary.²⁰

From this point on Biandrata ceases to play any part in our history. He had won his contest with Dávid, and had secured the organization of the church on a basis that promised to ensure its safety from attack under the law, and thus he may with some reason be said to have saved it from imminent ruin; but even if so, it was at the sacrifice of any further leadership or influence in the Unitarian community. Probably the last word that we have from his pen is a letter that he wrote in 1580 from Gyulafehérvár to his and Dávid's old friend and colleague in reform, Palaeologus, who had now returned to Poland.²¹ It is dated January 10, and thus immediately after the judgment of the Polish churches had been subscribed. It is mildly apologetic for the course he has taken with regard to Dávid, and intimates that he was less disturbed by Dávid's doctrine than by the consequences resulting from it.

The later years of Biandrata's life are obscured by conflicting rumors. Some would have it that after a year or two he removed with Socinus to Poland in order the better to enjoy the favor of his patron, King Stephen, and there died. It is certain, however, that he continued to live at Gyulafehérvár and to practice his profession at court, where his medical skill was highly valued; but he appears henceforth to have lost his old interest in his church, and to have cared only for amassing wealth. Hence he seems more and more to have withdrawn from association with the Unitarians, and to have cultivated relations chiefly with Catholics of the court circle; so that the rumor naturally arose that he had quite forsaken his old faith and gone back to Romanism. It is true that he had intimate relations with the Jesuit fathers, bore witness to their learning and blameless life, and ministered faithfully to their physical needs, and that they highly esteemed him in turn, and were persistent in their efforts to effect his conversion; but at length they gave him up as incorrigible, and he remained to the end steadfast in his heresy. He led a lonely life, but at the end he had the companionship of his nephew and namesake, whom in his last will he made heir of all his property, on condition that he remain steadfast in the Uni-

¹⁹ Cf. Possevino, *Transilvania*, p. 189; dated in 1584.

²⁰ So stated by Bishop George Boros.

²¹ Quoted in part in *Defensio*, p. 280 f.

tarian faith. The date and place of his death are variously reported; but it is established that he died at Gyulafehérvár early in May, 1588, at the age of 72. Whether there is truth in the persistent rumor that he was smothered in his sleep by his nephew who was impatient for his promised inheritance is open to serious doubt, though Socinus evidently crediting the rumor attributed his death to the just judgment of God.²²

In the very year when the tragedy of Francis Dávid was being enacted, a movement was taking shape that threatened ill to the whole cause of the Reformation in Transylvania. This was the introduction of the Jesuits into the country.²³ Even before he became King of Poland Stephen Báthory had greatly desired to see the Catholic religion restored in Transylvania and had repeatedly requested that priests be sent from Hungary, though none could then be had. Appeal was therefore made to the Jesuits, and at the time when Dávid's case was just about to break, the Jesuit father, János Leles, who had for some time been awaiting orders over the border at Égér in Hungary, appeared at Gyulafehérvár, where he was warmly received by Christopher Bathory, and was easily persuaded by him to stay and take charge of the education of the young Prince Sigismund, then a lad of seven. They at once began to lay plans for the introduction of the Jesuits into the country, in order to win the inhabitants back to their old faith by the quiet methods of teaching, preaching and personal influence. As the cause of the Unitarians, who were still the most powerful of the Protestant sects, was now in confusion for want of a leader, the time seemed auspicious for aggressive Catholic action, and it was decided to establish colleges at Kolozsvár and Gyulafehérvár. Under John Sigismund the Diet had indeed ordered that no more monks should be admitted into Transylvania; but despite this Stephen decided to bring them in, and with his cooperation a band of ten chosen members of the order, with Jacob Wujek as their Rector,²⁴ was brought to Kolozsvár even

²² *Opera*, II, 538 a. Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, I, 481-485; Jakab, *Adat, passim*; Burian, *Dissertatio*, pp. 275-288; *Epistolae et Acta*, I, 210, II, 30, 53; Benko, *Transilvania*, II, 216; Leonardus Rubenus, *De idolatria* (Coloniae, 1597), p. 71; Illia, *Ortus*, p. 38; Haner, *Historia*, p. 304; Portrait in Kanyaró, *Unitáriusok*, p. 43; and in Vincenzo Malacarne, *Commentario*. . . Giorgio Biondrata, etc. di (Padova, 1814).

²³ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, I, 266-270; Bod, *Historia*, I, 458-467.

²⁴ Returning later to Poland Wujek engaged in an important controversy with Socinus on the divinity of Christ. Cf. Socinus, *Opera*, II, 529 ff.

before the date of Dávid's death. They were given residence in an abandoned Dominican abbey at Kolozsmonostor just outside the city and there quietly resided for eight years before proceeding further. They at once set to work making converts in increasing numbers; for they discovered that while the upper classes were nearly all Protestant, many of the common people were still Catholics at heart and were glad to return to their old religious customs. They opened a school in 1581, and took steps for opening one as soon as possible at Gyulafehérvár.²⁵

The Estates and magnates, however, being overwhelmingly of the Protestant confessions, were greatly offended that the priests, who had practically been banned from the country for a quarter of a century, and their properties confiscated, should now be trying stealthily to creep back; and before the King's diploma had been issued confirming them in possession of their seat, the Diet publicly censured the Prince for introducing the Jesuits, and forbade him to bring them into any other places either by force or peaceably.²⁶ Nevertheless, the camel had now got its nose under the tent, and the traditional result followed. Hardly were the fathers settled in their quarters at Kolozsmonostor before they began to press the Prince for permission to bring their school into the city itself. Christopher gladly fell in with a design that he and Stephen had long cherished, and the King therefore assigned to them a long-deserted Franciscan cloister in Kolozsvár with an adjoining church and adjacent grounds, as well as an abandoned convent which had fallen to the crown when the Catholics were driven from the country, all near the centre of the city.²⁷ Generous land endowments were added for the support of the foundation, including curiously enough three villages that had reverted to the crown in Isabella's time, and had later been presented to Biandrata by Stephen, and which the latter had lately repurchased and now devoted again to their earlier purpose. At Kolozsvár itself, still very strongly Unitarian, with the government entirely in Unitarian hands, so hostile was public feeling to the Jesuits that they did not venture to set it at defiance by taking possession at once, but bided their time until 1588 when, taking advantage of a plague then furiously raging which distracted all attention, they quietly moved in.

²⁵ Cf. *Epistolae et Acta*, i, 220-222.

²⁶ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 267; *Magyar Emlékek*, iii, 157, 39.

²⁷ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 266 f.

Meantime the deaths of both Christopher and Stephen Báthory were the occasion of much confusion and the beginning of wide changes in the affairs of both State and church. During his brief rule Christopher had suffered much from ill health, and his early death was feared. Some of his counselors therefore, wishing to ensure a peaceful succession and to avoid a contest for the vacant throne, urged him to consent to having his young son Sigismund created Vaivode while he himself still lived. Though reluctant to have his son burdened with such heavy cares while yet so young, he was at length persuaded by the urgency of his advisers, and Stephen also after at first violently opposing the plan at length gave his assent to it. In the Diet, too, strong objections were urged; but they were overruled, and Sigismund Báthory was duly elected Vaivode of Transylvania in 1581 when but nine years of age. Shortly afterwards Christopher, feeling the approach of death, commended the boy to the Jesuit father Lelesi for education and guidance, and devoutly died.²⁸

During Sigismund's minority the government was at first administered by a regency of twelve;²⁹ while he himself, as appointed by his father, continued subject to his religious guardian, who carefully directed his education and missed no opportunity to mold his mind in the right way. His education was carried on in the palace by his Jesuit teachers, and many sons of the leading nobles now abandoned the Unitarian school at Kolozsvár for the new Jesuit one at Gyulafehérvár for the sake of intimacy with the young Prince. This pleased the Jesuits, who well knew how easy it would be to mold them into good Catholics and thus weaken the Protestant cause, as was also being done in their schools in Poland. The results of this bringing up under clerical patronage, while the responsibilities of governing the country were borne by experienced statesmen, became evident when he at length assumed the powers of actual ruler. For he had from his youth cherished the ambition to enter the Church and become a Cardinal, and this desire continued to obsess him after political power was laid upon him. But now, instead of being ruler of a united people, he found his subjects divided into conflicting groups, pulling two different ways. On the one hand were those that desired to keep Transylvania a separate Hungarian state, independent of the Empire, and who for support to this end relied upon a treaty alliance with Turkey. This party in-

²⁸ Cf. Bethlen, *Historia*, ii, 443-450.

²⁹ *Id. op.*, ii, 452.

cluded most of the Protestant population, who were anxious to conserve the gains of the Reformation. On the other hand were those that felt that the welfare of the country would be safest if it broke off relations with Turkey, and though sacrificing some of its political independence sought shelter under the German Empire. This party embodied a hope which the government at Vienna had never abandoned in the seventy years since the battle of Mohács, and it included the now reviving Catholic interest, had the strong approval of Rome, and was ably directed by the Jesuits at court, who had the intimate confidence of the young Prince. Pulled three ways between these two political parties and his inner personal desires, Sigismund found himself unable to pursue a consistent, independent course, and showed himself an unstable, impulsive ruler, easily influenced and made the pliant tool of different interests. So (to anticipate the end of his career), after a vacillating course in which he several times tried to divest himself of his office and its uncongenial responsibilities, grown weary of the vexations and burdens of public life, while he saw Transylvania kicked about like a foot-ball between Turkey and the Empire, he abdicated in 1599, left the Principality to his cousin, the Jesuit Cardinal Andrew Báthory of Poland, and left the country forever as he supposed, hoping to seek peace by joining a monastic order at Rome, yet destined once more to return a year later to resume rule as Prince for a few brief and stormy months.³⁰

Sigismund's uncle, King Stephen of Poland, was much concerned for his young nephew, of whom he was very fond, and kept close watch of his development, writing him letters of counsel as to his studies and his serious responsibilities as ruler, and also emphasizing his duties to the cause of religion. For Stephen was a very devout Catholic, and desired nothing more fervently than that Transylvania should by all lawful means be brought back to the mother Church. In the year before his death, therefore, he addressed to Sigismund an earnest testamentary letter,³¹ commending to his especial interest the Jesuit colleges at Kolozsvár and Gyulafehérvár, which he and Christopher had

³⁰ Cf. Bethlen, *Historia*, iv, 44-257.

³¹ Cf. *Akta metryki koronnej* . . . *Stefana Batorego, 1576-1586* (Records of the Crown Archives of S. B.), ed. Pawiński (Warszawa, 1882), *Źródło Dziejowe*, xi, 291-295; also in Pápai, *Rudus*, p. 157 f; Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 268; Lampe, *Historia*, p. 313. If Pápai's version is authentic in using the name *Unitarii* (so also Illia, *Ortus*, p. 68) where other versions have *Arii*, it is perhaps the earliest documentary use of the name.

endowed from their own funds, for he saw that they were in danger of being overthrown by the Unitarians of Kolozsvái, abetted also by the Calvinists and Lutherans. He laments that the young Prince's fellow-students are heretics who may corrupt his faith, and that none of his intimate counselors is Catholic,⁸² though the next few years were to show that his misgivings were needless.

The members of the Diet, however, perceived what forces were at work behind the scenes, and in 1588 at Megyes they rallied against the threatening peril and by unanimous vote gave the young Prince to understand that he must give up either the Jesuits or his rule. The pressure thus put upon him was so strong that he felt forced, though a Catholic, to exclude all Jesuits from Transylvania within twenty five days, and to declare all their properties forfeit to the State.⁸³ This act however did not put an end to their influence. Though without legal sanction they had quietly and steadily grown in strength at Kolozsvár ever since their arrival in 1579, and in 1585 they were said already to have 230 pupils in their school there. They must therefore have left many friends behind to favor their cause. Hence plans were soon forming for restoring to them their schools at Kolozsmonostor and Gyulafehérvár in 1589; though disorders ensued, and they were alternately banished and recalled several times before the end of the century. For apart from their missionary activity among the common people and their conversion of noble youth sent to their schools, they were found to be persistently stirring up civil strife and interfering in affairs of government, and thus inviting the hostility of the strong Protestant majority in the Diet. In fact, under cover of their religious ministry and their teaching they were losing no opportunity to promote a far sighted scheme in the political world. For it was becoming clear that they were quietly plotting to bring about a union of Transylvania with the Empire in a Catholic state under the rule of the German Hapsburgs, instead of its being merely an unstable principality under the rule of Hungarian Princes with a Protestant Diet, and that with this plan Sigismund was expected to cooperate. Already in 1583 the original

⁸² This document is the more interesting for the evidence it gives that the Unitarians were still a party to be seriously taken into account. In the metropolis of the country at Kolozsvár they were strongly predominant.

⁸³ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek* III, 248-257, 100, Uzoni, *Historia*, I, 268, 208, Lampe *Historia*, pp. 314-327. See also *Relatio brevis ejectionis Societatis Jesu e Transylvania* in *Epistolae et Acta*, II, 254-263, Bod, *Historia*, I, 458-466.

administration by a regency of twelve had been replaced by a close triumvirate,³⁴ and now his Jesuit advisers were encouraging him to feel restive even under the rule of the elder statesmen.³⁵ In 1589 therefore, before placing his signature to the Articles lately passed at the Megyes Diet, he was induced to insert in them secretly an article declaring him absolute Prince.³⁶ He then assumed ruling powers accordingly, and denied his late governors access to his presence.

As a first step in the proposed plan, Sigismund now began in 1591, at the age of twenty, under the inspiration of his Jesuit advisers, secretly to plan a revolt from his allegiance to the Turkish power.³⁷ The Pope strongly favored breaking the existing treaty, but the plan was slow in maturing, for in the Diet there was determined opposition, openly offered by some of the Prince's most able and respected counselors and by many of the chief magnates. Sigismund, however, went on, and by a solemn oath given to the Emperor Rudolf he bound himself to break the treaty with the Turks. On the other hand, the members of the Diet who did not favor this policy saw in such an action nothing but ruin for the country, and offered such determined opposition that for a time he found himself baffled, laid down his office in anger, and went into unwilling exile, from which however the Diet soon recalled him.³⁸ Welcomed with expressions of joy on all sides, he professed forgiveness of his opponents, and disclaimed any intention of taking vengeance on any of them. All this, however, was said for effect and to disarm suspicion; for he at once took counsel with his most trusted followers, and formed a plot to put out of the way those that had been most active in opposing his political policies.

At the time of the Diet then meeting at Kolozsvár, therefore, when the question of breaking with Turkey was again discussed, and was opposed as before, Sigismund invited the Senators to meet at his residence on Sunday that they might accompany him to divine worship. Once there they were treacherously surrounded by soldiers, and thirteen of the company were seized and placed under arrest. On the following day, August 28, 1594, the five principal ones, charged with conspiracy

³⁴ Cf. Bethlen, *Historia*, ii, 463-473.

³⁵ Up to 1588 Sigismund was directed by the venerable János Götzi as Governor; but he now resigned on account of age. Cf. Haner, *Historia*, p. 306.

³⁶ Cf. Bethlen, *Historia*, ii, 563-565.

³⁷ Cf. Bethlen, *Historia*, iii, 18 ff.

³⁸ Cf. Bethlen, *Historia*, iii, 386, 434.

but without lawful trial, were taken to the marketplace and publicly beheaded, Sigismund himself witnessing the execution.³⁹ Of the remaining eight, four were strangled privately and the rest were banished and despoiled of their wealth.⁴⁰ Thus Sigismund, having removed his chief opponents and appropriated their great wealth on which he relied for the prosecution of the war to come, struck terror into the hearts of the others, and now proceeded to carry out his plan, made a treaty with the Emperor Rudolf, transferred the supreme allegiance of Transylvania to him, assumed the new title of Prince of the Holy Roman Empire,⁴¹ and married the daughter of an Austrian Archduke (1595).

Although this bloody tragedy was for an alleged political crime and not for any religious offence, yet it had serious effects upon the fortunes of the Unitarian movement. For it happened that the opposition had centered at Kolozsvár, and the five chief victims therefore (and doubtless at least some of the rest) were all Unitarians, leading citizens of Kolozsvár and pillars of the churches there, as well as prominent magnates of Transylvania. Their untimely death was thus a severe blow to the Unitarian cause, and perceptibly weakened it.⁴² Dávid in his time had had a foreboding of the danger that was then beginning to threaten. It was reported that he used to say to one of his friends, 'I can see that the Prince means to bring in the Jesuits, and hence I often warn my ministers to be on their guard lest they be overcome by them; but they will not listen to me.'⁴³

It was just at the beginning of this period of political uncertainty and terror that George Enyedı was called in 1592 after the sudden death of Hunyadi, to direct the life of the Unitarian churches as their Superintendent.⁴⁴ He was born at Enyed in 1554, and having shown

³⁹ Their names deserve record Alexander Kendı, Gabriel Kendı, János Ifıu, János Ferró, Gregory Litterati (Déak)

⁴⁰ Cf Bethlen, *Historia*, III, 439 f, 459-487, Uzoni, *Historia* I, 209 f, Bod, *Historia* I 468 f. Before a year had passed, Sigismund realizing that this treacherous act had covered his name with deep infamy, bitterly repented of it, saying that he had not ordered it of his own will, but had only permitted it after being incessantly urged thereto by his two chief political advisers, Francis Gesztı and Stephen Bocskai, who must bear the chief blame Cf Bethlen, *Historia*, III, 554 f

⁴¹ Cf Bethlen, *Historia*, III, 519-530, 552 f.

⁴² Cf Uzoni, *Historia*, I, 209 f, 618

⁴³ Cf *Epistolae et Acta*, I, 186

⁴⁴ Cf Uzoni, *Historia*, 284-319, F S Bock, *Historia Antitrinitariorum*, etc (Rc giomonti et Lipsiae, 1774), I, 324 ff; Wallace, *Antitrim*, II, 415-518.

much promise as a scholar he was sent abroad at the expense of the Kolozsvár Council, and studied for three or four years in Germany, at Vienna, in Switzerland and at Padua. Returning to Kolozsvár he taught theology and philosophy at the Unitarian college for ten years, and then for six more was its Rector as well as Superintendent of the churches. He fortunately did not fall heir to the animosity which had made Hunyadi unpopular with many of the Unitarians on account of his part in the tragedy of Dávid; and at a period when many of the nobility, setting political interests above religious convictions, had been abandoning the Unitarian church and professing the Calvinist or the Catholic faith, while many others were yet wavering in their allegiance, he rose like a new Elijah to confirm the fainthearted, reassure the doubting, and increase the zeal of the faithful. He held annual synods of the pastors and conventions of the teachers alternately in the mother churches at Kolozsvár or Torda, which were numerous attended. As Superintendent he was vigilant and laborious, and as a teacher he showed himself a brilliant scholar of wide learning and a profound knowledge of Scripture, one of the most learned men in Transylvania. An eloquent preacher, he watched with deep concern the vacillating course of Sigismund, and openly prophesied the ruin to which it was sure to lead; and he was a sorrowful witness of the execution of the five Unitarian magnates in 1595. Yet the church was still vigorous, and in that year, besides those in southern Hungary, there were in Transylvania and the neighboring parts of Hungary more than 425 churches under his supervision, and over sixty in the three Szekler counties.⁴⁵ He suffered from ill health, which must have been aggravated by the distressful experiences he had to undergo, and he died in 1597 at the early age of 43 years.

Several published writings are attributed to Enyedi but his fame rests upon a posthumous work in which he made an exhaustive study of the passages of Scripture commonly appealed to in support of the doctrine of the Trinity.⁴⁶ This book, of ample size, based on an unpublished work by Stephen Basilius, was first printed (perhaps in 1598) and circulated secretly, but it was soon discovered to be a terribly dangerous book and was put under the ban. All possible copies were publicly

⁴⁵ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 149.

⁴⁶ *Explicationes locorum Veteris & Novi Testamenti, ex quibus Trinitatis dogma stabiliri solet* (Groningae, 1670).

burned, and it was interdicted throughout the Empire. Later on it was translated into Hungarian by Matthew Torockai, a successor of Enyedí as Superintendent, and published at Kolozsvár in 1619. Finally, after two generations, and repeated confutations by Calvinists, Lutherans and Catholics, the original Latin was clandestinely republished under liberal auspices in Holland in 1670.⁴⁷ The work was generally admired for its great thoroughness, though opinions varied as to its scholarship and its interpretations; but it was well over a half-century before the orthodox gave up trying to answer its arguments.

The death of Enyedí in 1597, followed by the abdication of Sigismund two years later, may fairly be taken to mark the end of a period in our history. The second half of the sixteenth century had seen the permanent division of the Protestant forces of Transylvania into three separate camps, and also saw the Unitarians, after a few years of triumphant prosperity, and after acquiring by a narrow margin a permanent status as a recognized form of religion with equal rights under the law, decline to a position of inferior power, in which it had constantly to be on the alert against both Catholic and Calvinist aggression. During most of the seventeenth century, on the other hand, the government of the country lay in Protestant hands, in which the Unitarians, though not so often subjected to bloody persecution, were jealously watched by Calvinist rulers disposed to be bitterly hostile to them as wicked heretics, and were pretty steadily pursued by manifold and severe vexations and oppressions. Meantime there intervened several years of chaos in which the Hungarian Protestant nobles on the one hand, and the Catholic Germans on the other, strove bitterly for supremacy. A brief account of this struggle will form the prelude to the next chapter.

⁴⁷ Cf. Szabó, *Könyvtár*, i, 222, ii, 77. The most important works controverting it were: Benedictus Szent Király, *Vindicatio locorum Veteris Testamenti*, etc. (Marpurgi, 1619), Theodorus Thummus, *Controversia adversum G. Enyedinum* (Francofurti, 1620), Nyilas István Melotai, *Speculum Trinitatis* (Debrecen, 1622), Abraham Calovius, *Theologia Naturalis* (Lipsiae, 1646), Justus Feuerbornius, *Anti Enyedinum* (Giessae, 1654, 1658), Paulus P. Jász Berényi, *Examen doctrinae Arianae Socinianaë* (Londini, 1662), Johannes Henricus Bisterfeld, *De uno Deo* (Lugduni Batavorum, 1639), Ambrosius de Peñalosa, *Opus egregium de Christi . . . divinitate . . . contra Enyedinum* (Viennae, 1635).

CHAPTER VII

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH UNDER CALVINIST PRINCES, 1604-1691

THE LAST DECADE of the sixteenth century was a period of utmost confusion in both the political and the religious life of Transylvania, and the accounts of its history which most writers offer us are themselves confused and inconsistent as to both events and sequences. It is necessary however to attempt to give at least an abridged review of the period in order that the reader may clearly realize the kind of world in which the Unitarian Church, not yet a generation old, had to struggle for its existence. After Sigismund had put out of the way those that had led in opposing his political designs, he thought the time ripe for entering upon his plan for laying aside the burdens of his uncongenial office, as a step toward realizing his fond dream of winning a Cardinal's hat. After preliminary negotiations, therefore, he agreed with the Emperor Rudolf in 1595 to transfer to him the sovereignty over Transylvania, in return for which he was to receive an honorable title, the Duchy of Oppeln in Silesia, and a handsome annual income. The rights of the churches were to be left intact, and the Diet swore loyalty to the Emperor. But before the Archduke Maximilian could come to take over the reins of government the fickle Sigismund repented of his bargain, returned to the country, and was again recognized as Prince. Yet after but a few weeks, again tired of ruling, he persuaded his cousin Andrew Báthory, then a Jesuit Cardinal in Poland, to undertake the rule of Transylvania, abdicated, and withdrew from the country.

The Emperor, Rudolf II, did not propose so easily to surrender the prize toward which the eyes of the Empire had eagerly looked for half a century. He had, before his accession in 1576, been brought up at court in Spain, and was an eccentric, absolutist Catholic, whose reason eventually became so unhinged that he had at last to be removed from office. He had no idea of freedom of conscience, and it was a cardinal principle of his rule to destroy religious toleration and exterminate

Protestantism Claiming Transylvania as now rightfully his own under the treaty with Sigismund, he sent General George Básta to administer it as military Governor Básta was an Italian soldier, and perhaps the most relentless and cruel general in modern history '*Saeuissimus mortuum*,' Bod calls him Seeking at one stroke to reduce Transylvania to submission, and to destroy Protestantism root and branch, he made the next five or six years one long intermittent reign of terror He threatened to kill every grown person in the country who refused to join the Catholic Church He seized Protestant churches and gave them to the Catholics He drove away their preachers, tortured them, flayed them, and burned them alive, suspended them to smother in the smoke over piles of their burning books, spared neither women nor children, and gave their wives and daughters over to his mercenaries to be ravished. For generations afterwards parents used Básta's name to frighten their children All these outrages fell with double severity on the Unitarians, who as the ruling element at Kolozsvár had been most hostile to the Jesuits who had their headquarters there

Andrew Báthory had but a short rule as Prince Taking the field against Básta he was killed or assassinated in battle at the end of 1599 Rudolf then made the Wallachian Michael temporary Vaivode of Transylvania, a turbulent adventurer, bold, ambitious, greedy, more cruel than even Básta, and he now ravaged the country again Sigismund then, realizing the desperate state of his country, returned to it once more in 1600 and attempted to rally his people Having gloriously routed Michael at Mirisló he was reinstated by the nobles as Prince, and convened a Diet late that year in a remote part of the land, at the little Szekler village of Léczfalva, about twenty five miles northeast of Brassó (Kronstadt), and sought to unite all factions on the old basis of religious liberty and mutual toleration¹ But Michael and Básta now joined forces and defeated him, whereupon he joined in a truce, accepted a castle in Bohemia and a handsome pension, and left Transylvania for the last time

Básta's long-continued inhuman treatment of the province so exasperated all classes of the inhabitants that they at length united in the sum-

¹ Cf *Magyar Emlékek*, iv, 551, Károly Veszély, *Erdélyi Egyháztörténetelmű Adatok* (Contributions to the church history of Transylvania), Kolozsvár, 1860, p 233 In the records of this Diet is found the first known use of the word *Unitaria* in any public document

mer of 1602 and rose in rebellion against him under a heroic native Unitarian leader named Mózes Székely.² He was one of the ordinary Szekler nobility, who early in his career had supported the cause of Békés, and had later served with great bravery under Stephen in Poland, commanding troops that Christopher had sent to aid him in his war with Moscow. In the present war he had for a time sided with Michael, as had most of the Szeklers, whose patriotism had been but lukewarm since the loss of their ancient liberties in the time of King John. But Mózes detested the brutal rule of Michael in Transylvania, whom the Szeklers therefore deserted, joining with the rest in resisting the intolerable cruelties of both the Wallachians and the Imperial forces of Básta. At first Mózes was defeated, but securing Turkish aid and ignoring Sigismund's recent settlement with Rudolf, he invaded Transylvania in the spring of 1603, drove Básta's troops out of Kolozsvár, expelled the Jesuits there as disturbers of the public peace, pillaged their churches and destroyed their school buildings. His followers now unanimously elected Mózes Prince at a Diet at Gyulafehérvár, and the Sultan confirmed the election. Not only had he great influence among the Szeklers, but even the Saxons took his part. As he was a Unitarian, it looked for a time as though the Unitarians were again to have for ruler one of their own faith instead of a fanatical persecutor. But Básta rallied, and again enlisted the support of the Wallachians, who under their new Vaivode Raduli suddenly invaded Transylvania through a mountain pass near Brassó, surprised Mózes's troops in camp by night, slaughtered half his forces, and killed Mózes himself heroically fighting. It was a crushing defeat, and the Transylvanians regarded it as a second Mohács. The flower of the Transylvanian nobility perished, including the magnates from the leading families, and out of 6,000 barely half escaped.³

After this disaster Básta returned again, for the fifth time — the government had changed twelve times in six years! He completed the

² Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, i, 387.

³ The date was July 17, 1603. The site of the battle is variously designated. The most precise definition makes it at Rosenau, some eleven miles southwest of Brassó. Other authorities name the valley of Alabor near the paper-mill; also Apáczá. A monument was erected on the spot where the fallen were buried. It bore the pathetic inscription:

Quos genuit cives, hic Transylvania claudit.
Heu, parvo tumulo quanta ruina jacet!

desolation of the now prostrate land, frightfully ravaging it, and falling especially upon the Protestants. All Transylvania was worse than ever laid waste by fire and sword. Terrible famine followed to exact the last toll. No draft animals were left in a country that had abounded in them, and plows had to be drawn by man-power, ten men to a plow. Grain cost fabulous prices, and men were driven to eat raw roots and herbs, the toasted bones or raw skins of animals, the flesh of dogs, cats or horses; some driven to madness resorted even to cannibalism, and thousands died of starvation.⁴

Two months after the fatal battle, Básta, having apparently reduced the country to submission, summoned the tattered remnants of the nobility to a Diet at Déva, to determine the conditions of peace. The members realized that if Básta so chose they were all in imminent danger of death as rebels; but after some conciliatory speaking Básta, who had at first planned to put to death all the nobles present, was somewhat mollified, and decided to give them both their lives and the most of their property. The cities that had been disloyal, however, were to be allowed to hold only Catholic worship, and Kolozsvár was to resign to the Jesuits the great church, the Pastors' houses and the schools as a restitution for what had been destroyed under Mózes; further, the disloyal cities were to be heavily fined and be deprived of local self-government.⁵ After the Diet Básta concentrated all his savagery upon the Unitarian Church, came to Kolozsvár with his soldiers, and determined to scatter its members. He planned to have the Superintendent, Matthew Toroczkai, and the chief Pastor and Rector of the school, put to death; but the latter made his escape to Poland, while the former went into hiding in the iron mines at Toroczkó until the trouble had passed. The persecution lasted until well toward spring. As decreed at the Diet at Déva, the Unitarians at Kolozsvár were forced to pay a fine of 70,000 florins, and to give over to the Jesuits, in restitution for the damage they had suffered under Mózes, the large church and one other, the Pastor's house, a school, and several private residences. They were forbidden to hold public worship, and only one minister, Johannes Bróser, the Pastor of the Saxon Unitarian church, was bold enough to stay at his post, secretly and at great risk. For

⁴ For the gruesome details cf. Bod, *Historia*, i, 474 f; ii, 2 f, quoting Thuanus; Istvánfius, *Historia*, p. 784.

⁵ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 627-636.

nearly three years the Unitarians met for worship in secret at the house of the noble Samuel Biró. Only the Jesuits held public worship, and they looked for the time soon to come when Protestantism should be wholly exterminated.

The triumph was of short duration, for the fires of revolt were smoldering. Gabriel Bethlen, a Calvinistic magnate who had married the widow of Mózes Székely, and had tried to continue his rebellion, was defeated and fled to Temesvár where he bided his time under the protection of the Turk. He now appealed to Stephen Bocskai to head a new revolt. Bocskai was a Hungarian magnate and an uncle of Sigismund Báthory, and had been one of his advisers who urged the beheading of the five Unitarian magnates at Kolozsvár; and he was now captain of the garrison at Várad in Hungary. He had long been displeased with Básta's policy of cruelty, and was the more easily persuaded to head the rising. Appealing to all lovers of religion and liberty he won the adherence of important factions in Hungary, and had the powerful aid of Turkish forces. In Transylvania all classes and cities rallied to him. He won speedy success, was unanimously elected Prince by the Transylvania Diet, and a little later Prince of Hungary by the Hungarian Diet at Szerencs early in 1605. In that year he occupied all of Transylvania and Hungary, drove Básta from the country, and restored the province prostrated by ten years of war. He proclaimed religious liberty for both Protestants and Catholics, and gave back to the Unitarians the churches and other property at Kolozsvár that had been taken from them by the Jesuits. The Emperor Rudolf sought and obtained peace, which was confirmed by the Treaty of Vienna in June, 1606,⁶ and guaranteed the religious freedom of Protestants, restored the properties seized in the time of unrest, and gave Bocskai all the dominions in Hungary that Sigismund had held, and the title of Prince of the Holy Roman Empire. Thus Bocskai had won the independence of Transylvania, reestablished religious liberty, and enshrined himself in the memory of his followers as an incomparable hero; and then a half-year later he suddenly died in December, 1606, of poison as it was believed.

Toroczkaï's superintendency (1601-16) began in tragedy and tumult, but ended in comparative quiet and slow recovery among his churches.⁷ During his first four years Sigismund made his futile effort to regain

⁶ Cf. Lampe, *Historia*, p. 335, Bod, *Historia*, ii, 5.

⁷ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 961-964.

his power, the land was devastated by the plague and ravaged by Michael and Básta, Mózes's brief rule ended in his defeat and death, Básta burned Unitarian churches throughout the Province, the heads of the church had to flee from Kolozsvár and its properties were given to the Jesuits; ministers, teachers and students scattered in Transylvania and Hungary, and Unitarians were hunted like sheep by the Imperial soldiers and were taxed to the point of ruin; while Toroczkai hidden for months in his mine solaced himself by composing hymns to be sung in brighter days. As already related, with Bocskai's rise in 1605 freedom of worship returned; churches and schools were restored to the Unitarians, the Jesuits were expelled and the scattered Unitarians came together again; while Toroczkai began again to hold synods alternately at Kolozsvár and Székely-Keresztúr, Torda having been burned by Básta. Discipline was restored in the demoralized churches and schools and they struggled back to normal existence; though as early as 1606 the synod found it necessary to exclude from fellowship in the church the Judaizers who in another generation were to involve it in so much trouble. Toroczkai did not leave behind him any notable literary remains, but he translated Enyedi's book into Hungarian, and a brief Catechism and a Hungarian translation of the Racovian Catechism were published after his death.⁸

The Unitarians at Kolozsvár enjoyed but a brief respite under Bocskai. In 1606 they cheerfully acceded to their benefactor's request that they grant the Reformed equal rights with themselves,⁹ and harmony seemed at hand; but two years later the rule fell into the hands of Gabriel Báthory, the last Prince of that name, who having changed his religion from Catholic to Calvinist now vented the spite of his cruelty upon both Catholics and Unitarians at Kolozsvár, driving them from their homes, and assigning to the Calvinists for their worship an abandoned Dominican cloister.¹⁰ It is true that all the Princes of this period upon their accession to power took solemn oath to preserve unimpaired the liberties of the four received religions, but so far as concerned the Unitarians the laws recognizing their rights were largely a dead letter. Their right to hold religious worship was not indeed denied, but it was often restricted. They were oppressed and repressed

⁸ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, II, 963 f.

⁹ Cf. Uzoni, *op cit*, II, 647.

¹⁰ Cf. Uzoni, *op cit*, II, 648-651.

in various ways, and the Calvinists often surpassed the Catholics in injustice to them.

Gabriel Bethlen, who ruled 1613-29 was the most renowned of the Transylvanian Princes. He was a great general and a determined and honest statesman. He made Transylvania independent of the Habsburg influence, and his fame filled Europe. He was a generous patron of education and the church, and gave complete toleration to Lutherans and Catholics, though as little as possible to Unitarians. On one ground or another he deprived over 100 Unitarian ministers of their pulpits,¹¹ and replaced them by Calvinists. Nevertheless, the Unitarians, though unable now to take the aggressive in face of the active unfriendliness of the rest of the religious world, went on their way peaceably and faithfully as good citizens, loyal patriots and earnest Christians, and bore their trials with patience and heroic fortitude. Unfortunately, however, their progress was seriously checked by troubles within their own body, which must now claim our attention.

Even before Dávid's trial there were divergent doctrinal tendencies among his followers, some of whom were inclined to hold the traditional views, objecting to hardly more of the old doctrines than those of the Trinity and the deity of Christ; whereas others were disposed to carry the reform further, as they might easily do while they were not as yet restrained by any formal and definite confession.

The attempt to discourage further changes in doctrine, which culminated in the case of Dávid, was only superficially successful. The ministers under duress might subscribe the confession dictated by Biandrata, but their personal opinions will not have changed, even though open expression of them were now made a crime. It was generally known that among both ministers and lay members there was wide dissent from the confession that Biandrata had forced upon them, and that various doctrines were privately held and practices quietly followed that might be regarded as innovations. As early as 1583 the Jesuit writer Possevino reports that a great many of the people of Kolozsvár are forsaking the Gospel for the Prophecies of the Old Testament, and that 'the Unitarian ministers in Szeklerland universally . . . abstain from blood and pork.'¹² In their literal devotion to the teachings of Scripture many of them discovered more and more points

¹¹ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 652 f; i, 353.

¹² Cf. his *Transilvania* (1584), p. 66; *Epistolae et Acta*, i, 280.

in which its plain commands were being neglected by Christians: such points as observance of the Sabbath and of feast or fast days, unleavened bread, abstinence from blood or unclean meats, and circumcision; and conscience made them feel bound to keep these commands, which had never been abrogated, as well as to abandon certain Christian usages which had never been ordained in Scripture. It was therefore but natural that these literal biblical Christians should presently be given the reproachful name of Judaizers or Sabbatarians, and be looked at askance as corrupters of true Christianity; and the measures against innovators passed at frequent intervals in the Diets during half a century from 1578 on were undoubtedly more often aimed at them than at simply the non-adorants who followed Dávid.

The Sabbatarian movement,¹³ although it infected Reformed and Catholic circles to some extent,¹⁴ spread most widely among the Unitarians in the Szeklerland. While the tendency to Sabbatarian views and practices antedated him, and had already been noted by Possevino as said above, its reputed founder and first enthusiastic prophet was one Andrew Eossi of Szent Erzsébet, a Szekler village some twenty-five miles southeast of Maros-Vásárhely.¹⁵ He was a wealthy Szekler of the upper nobility, and one of the earliest adherents of Dávid to accept the Unitarian faith. Prematurely bereft of his wife and three sons, and broken in health, he sought comfort in reading his Bible, and as a result of doing so he came to a fanatical conviction of the truth of the doctrine that soon came to be known as Sabbatarianism from the fact that the most conspicuous mark of its adherents was their observance of the Jewish Sabbath, and it was this that first invited persecution of them. With all the burning zeal of a new convert he now first won his neighbors and kinsfolk, and then gradually enlarged the circle. With much ability he made a compendium of central doctrines, and then treated them at length in various little books or essays, or in hymns

¹³ For the best exhaustive study of Sabbatarianism, cf. Samuel Kohn, *Die Sabbatarier in Siebenbürgen* (Budapest, 1894), being a revised and abridged translation of the author's *A Szombatosok történetük*, etc. (History of the Sabbatarians), Budapest, 1889. Cf. also László Kováry, 'A Szombatosok irodalmi maradványai' etc. (The literary remains . . . of the Sabbatarians), *Keresztény Magveto*, xxi (1886), 6-20, 76-88, 142-152, *Uzoni, Historia*, i, 80-86.

¹⁴ Cf. József Ferencz, 'Dávid Ferencz és a Szombatoság' (F. D. and Sabbatarianism), *Keresztény Magveto*, ix (1874), 338.

¹⁵ Cf. Boros, *Krónika*, i, 27-30, László Kováry, 'Péchi Simon Kancellár' (S. P., Chancellor), *Keresztény Magveto*, vi (1871), 35 ff; Kohn, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-45.

and didactic poems for popular use. As the press was not open to him, he had many manuscript copies of these made and secretly circulated. Though not an educated man, he had singular success in commending his doctrines to the popular mind, and until his death in 1599 he devoted all his time and strength and his considerable fortune to winning converts to his faith. Years before this he had already taken an important step toward ensuring its future by selecting and training up an apostle to succeed him. For after the death of his children he took under his wing their teacher, a brilliant young man named Simon Pécsi who fully shared his views and aims, and in order to prepare him for his apostleship he sent him abroad for long years of travel and study, which were a generation later to make him their powerful champion, as will be related hereafter.

Sabbatarianism as a religious movement was at first simply a variety of Christianity, which for various reasons commended itself to the more active-minded Unitarians, and to a considerable extent also to the Reformed, especially among the inhabitants of the Szekler counties. Though it had its roots in Christianity it was much influenced by Old Testament elements which Christianity had neglected but Judaism had retained, as noted above. It held that the whole law of Moses was to be kept as still valid, and that the Gospel had abolished none of its requirements. It held strongly to the absolute unity of God, and taught that Jesus, though not to be worshiped, was greater than all the Prophets, and was the promised Messiah.¹⁶ It was doubtless its outward observance of Jewish rites and customs more than its private doctrines that most tended to make it appear hostile to Christianity and to arouse most bitter antagonism among the authorized religions. By 1595 it had spread so much as to attract the attention of the Diet, which passed an order for suppressing it, which was enforced for a short time and then in 1600 was revived by the Wallack Vaivode Michael, who confiscated the property of the offenders.¹⁷ Further measures proving ineffective, the Diet at Besztercze in 1610 decreed that those confessing this religion be cited before the Diet and unless repenting be punished according to the law, and that their ministers be held in custody.¹⁸ Again in 1618 at the Diet at Kolozsvár Gabriel Bethlen felt compelled to

¹⁶ Cf. Kohn, *Sabbatharier*, pp. 85-97.

¹⁷ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, iii, 348.

¹⁸ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, vi, 170.

bring forward a law calling for a new search for members of this sect and punishment of them without regard, unless before the next Christmas they should have embraced one of the received religions¹⁹ Little is known about the details of these continued persecutions, but the repeated acts of legislation indicate that spasmodic attempts were made to enforce the law in all its severity. Thus at Maros-Vásárhely in 1600 Sabbatarian books and manuscripts were burned by the executioner, property was confiscated, and men were imprisoned and brutally flogged, so that many fled from their homes and sought refuge in the mountains or in other lands; yet these cases were of brief duration, and the laws remained without permanent effect. The Princes were occupied with dissensions at home and wars abroad, officers were loath to enforce the laws, especially when Sabbatarians outwardly conformed to the local churches, and even high officials and influential citizens in large numbers were secret adherents to a sect that was steadily growing in numbers and influence.²⁰

Already by 1600 the Sabbatarians, though not 'received' nor even tolerated, were regarded as practically a separate religion.²¹ The greater number of them were of Unitarian origin, and even if secretly they had meetings of their own and conformed to Jewish usages, they were registered as Unitarians and attended Unitarian worship; but in some villages there were also numerous ones belonging to the Reformed Church, and at Maros-Vásárhely almost all the Reformed had gone over to Sabbatarianism.²² The new religion flourished most in villages and small settlements in the open country, at first among the peasants in Maros and Udvárhely Counties, especially on the extensive estates of Eossi and Pécsi in more than thirty places; though it also found numerous adherents among the Hungarian artisans of the larger towns. As time went on many persons of education also were attracted, including a large part of the lesser Szekler nobility, and not a few of the higher nobility, who were its most zealous and generous supporters. Clandes-

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vii, 488

²⁰ It can not have failed to affect the fortunes of the Sabbatarians that Pécsi who, though nominally a Unitarian was at heart a confirmed Sabbatarian, was for twenty years from 1601 in offices of the highest influence under successive Princes, being at last Chancellor under Gabriel Bethlen. He will quietly have used his influence in favor of moderation.

²¹ *Magyar Emlékek*, v, 165

²² Cf. Mikó, *Adatok*, i, 29, Kohn, *Sabbatarianer*, p. 106

tine Sabbatarians, related by marriage to the families of Eössi and Pécsi were therefore found even among the highest state officials. Thus the new religion, though having no independent congregations or ministers, steadily spread for over thirty years, while its adherents became in practice more and more like Jews and less and less like Christians.

It was in the face of such a situation that Prince Gabriel Bethlen in 1618, having composed his political affairs, and feeling it of urgent importance to keep the religion of the country pure, determined to set religious affairs also in order. To this end he summoned from his pulpit at Várad János Keserüi Dajka, a very able, learned and energetic man, made him court preacher and Superintendent of the Reformed churches, entrusted to him the enforcement of the law lately passed against the Sabbatarians, and armed him with plenary authority. His first step was to weed out the Sabbatarians from among the Unitarians, in whose churches they were mostly concealed, and who had thus far made no effort to discipline them, though in the eye of the law they were clearly innovators.

The case of the Unitarian churches in these troubled days was rendered the worse by the fact that their Superintendent, Valentin Radecki,²³ instead of being a native was a Pole, who was not acquainted with their language, and was hence unable to give them efficient supervision, and even when needed did not leave Kolozsvár. Dajka, however, taking advantage of the law of 1577 that the Unitarian Superintendent might hold synods only at Kolozsvár and Torda,²⁴ more than once forbade the calling of a synod in the district where Sab-

²³ He was the son of Matthew Radecki, long Secretary of the city of Danzig (*v. supra*, i, 505). The chief pastor of Kolozsvár, when a fugitive in Poland in 1603-04 from the fury of Básta, was treated by him with great kindness and formed a warm friendship with him. Returning home he so strongly recommended Radecki that the authorities at Kolozsvár invited him to leave his post as Rector of the school at Łuclawice and become Pastor of the Saxon Unitarian church at Kolozsvár (1605). He later became chief pastor, and was Superintendent 1616-32, succeeding Toroczka. He was a fine scholar and an eloquent speaker, and though a Unitarian was highly regarded by Bethlen for his Latin scholarship. In his time Kolozsvár was terribly devastated and the rural churches were greatly weakened by the plague; but he did all possible in difficult circumstances to improve the discipline and good order of the churches. Taught by this experience of the inconvenience of having a Superintendent unable to speak their language, and thus hindered in giving them efficient supervision by visitations away from Kolozsvár, the Synod voted at his death that henceforth the Superintendent must always be a Hungarian. Cf. Uzon, *Historia*, II, 695-974.

²⁴ *v. supra*, Ms p. 117.

batarianism was supposed to be prevalent, or had it postponed when called, or forbade it altogether, and thus thwarted the church life of the Unitarians at pleasure. When at length he did sanction the calling of a synod of churches in the Szekler territory at Erdo Szent Gyorgy in November 1618, citing the Sabbatarians to appear, he insisted on presiding over it himself, and converted it to his own purposes. Here, under pressure from the investigating committee, the official boards of the churches were constrained to declare that the Sabbatarians did not belong to them, and were forever excluded from the fellowship of their church. Had they not done this they would have been regarded as guilty of sheltering the accused under the mantle of their religion.²⁵ Dajka next determined to use his power to the advantage of his own church, and instructed his clergy to bring the Sabbatarians back to Christianity. This attempt at forcible conversion led to endless persecutions of the Sabbatarians, some of whom conformed while others either suffered various penalties or else fled the country. At the same time it sorely wounded the Unitarian Church, for many of its members when accused or even merely suspected of holding Sabbatarian views chose rather to profess Calvinism than to face legal prosecution. Thus many in the Unitarian congregations were forcibly driven into the arms of the Reformed Church.²⁶

Not content with his success in thus uprooting Sabbatarianism in its main seat, Dajka undertook four years later in another district to increase the number of the Reformed churches at the expense of the Unitarians.²⁷ He cast hungry eyes on a large group of churches in the remote rural districts of the Szeklerland. Ever since the time of the Reformation the religious situation here had been unusual. Especially in the three districts known as the Háromszék all that had left the Catholic Church had continued to worship in a single church with but one minister, although the congregation had a mixed membership of both Unitarians (usually considerably in the majority) and Reformed.²⁸

²⁵ Cf Kohn, *Sabbatharianer* p 115

²⁶ Cf Kohn, *loc cit* Katona Istvan Geleji, *Titkok titka* (Mystery of mysteries — i.e., the Trinity), Gyula Fehérvár, 1645, p 22 of the preface, Szekely, *Történetek* p 132 f

²⁷ The Reformed writers usually pass over this unsavory story very lightly (cf Bod, *Historia* II, 312, Geleji, *op cit* preface). The version here given is from Uzon, *Historia* II, 898-900, as handed down by contemporary Unitarian witnesses. Cf also the Ms church histories of Szent Abrahami and Agh in the Unitarian library at Kolozsvár.

²⁸ This *simultaneum* as it was called, is still practiced by one little community, that at Fiatfalva near Székely Keresztúr, where two separate congregations, each with its own

Thus it came to pass that the larger number of the ministers in the district were Unitarian, although by tacit agreement it was common practice if the minister were Unitarian to have a Reformed teacher for the young, and *vice versa*.²⁹ This practice worked smoothly in these rural congregations, although for more than a century after 1577 the Unitarians in this district might not be visited or supervised by a Superintendent of their own faith, and even the ministers of their own choice must be ordained by a Reformed Superintendent.

Having learned that in many of these Szekler churches the ministers were Unitarian, Dajka determined to oust them and replace them by those that professed the Reformed faith. Taking advantage of the Prince's absence on a military campaign in Hungary, though doubtless by a tacit understanding with him, and also of the fact that most of those capable of bearing arms would also be out of the country, Dajka in 1622 proceeded to the Háromszék with a band of 300 soldiers, bearing an order in the Prince's name that the inhabitants in each village should appear before the Superintendent. While the minister was arrested and kept at his home under guard, the unlettered people were examined by Dajka and asked whether they believed in Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Not comprehending what was afoot they answered in the affirmative; whereupon they were dismissed to their homes in peace, while the Secretary was directed to record that they had confessed to being Calvinists. The minister was then brought in and ordered to accept the Reformed religion without hesitation. If he did not he was forthwith ejected, while some Trinitarian was pressed into service on the spot, ordained and forced upon the congregation as their minister. Thus by a pious fraud practiced upon simple and unsuspecting people, while all the gentry and leaders were absent and under arms in Hungary, the churches and incomes in two whole districts were at a single stroke taken from the Unitarians and delivered to the Reformed. Although these high-handed proceedings were much disapproved at the next meeting of the Diet, no steps were ever taken to repair the

minister, Bible, hymn-books and organ, use the church alternately, and attend each other's worship.

²⁹ As the church was responsible for both the religious and the secular education of the young, each well organized congregation employed a teacher whose office was only less important than that of the minister. He was often a minister awaiting settlement, or a theological student, and was in effect an assistant minister.

wrong done. No fewer than 62 churches were involved in this transaction.

When the report of these doings reached the other parts of the district, two of the ministers went to the town where the inquisition was in process, and having confirmed the rumor quickly traversed the other villages and towns in the valley and instructed ministers and people how to answer the question put to them. Thus the plan would have been frustrated had not a traitor arisen within the fold. For one Stephen Sikó, minister of the church at Seps-Szent György, chief town in the district, a man whose ambition had procured for him an honorable office among the Unitarians at the cost of their esteem, realizing that even if he remained among them he could not hope to become District Superintendent, proposed to Dajka that if he were appointed Superintendent of the district he would then profess the Reformed faith and accompany him on his visitation, so that when the people were asked if they professed the same religion as Pastor Sikó they would innocently answer, Yes. The plan was at once accepted and entered upon; but they had not gone far before they came to a parish whose patron, having been forewarned, armed himself and accompanied by all the women and men of two churches met Dajka and forbade him to enter their church. The like was done in several neighboring churches, so that Dajka, seeing that his plot was discovered, had to content himself with seizing the minister of the place and taking him in chains to Gyulafehérvár, leaving the Calvinist minister in the castle, protected by an escort.

After the Sabbatarians had been formally excluded from the Unitarian congregations in 1618 it seemed for some time as though their movement had been effectually put to sleep; for exclusion from membership in an authorized church debarred one from holding any public office, and this was regarded as a very serious matter, being almost equivalent to loss of citizenship. Yet after a few years of keeping successfully out of sight, Sabbatarianism suddenly came again to the surface in full activity, and that in a singular way. Simon Pécsi,³⁰ who was mentioned in connection with the rise of Sabbatarianism, was born in Hungary about 1560, and having early come to Transylvania he studied languages at Kolozsvár and became tutor to the three sons of Eossi, who seeing his promise determined to give him every advantage, pro-

³⁰ *v. supra*, p. 107. Cf. Kohn, *Sabbatharianer*, p. 129 ff., Kováry, 'Pécsi,' pp. 34-38

cured him a place at court, and sent him on a course of travels to foreign courts which lasted for eighteen years, and led him through Wallachia, Constantinople, North Africa, Italy, Spain, Portugal and France, everywhere associating with statesmen, and also assiduously studying. At length he returned, accomplished in the ways of diplomacy, fluent in twelve languages, and with a profound knowledge of Jewish learning. Eössi welcomed him back, adopted him as his own son, and soon died leaving him sole heir and thus one of the largest landowners in Transylvania. His rise in public life was now rapid. He became Secretary to four successive Princes and their intimate counselor, and eventually Chancellor to Gabriel Bethlen; and he contracted a marriage that related him to the first families of the country. He was for some years the most powerful man in Transylvania at its most brilliant period, and was employed by the Prince in the conduct of the most important negotiations with other powers. Then came his sudden fall. In 1621 he was seized and imprisoned in severe and close confinement. No trial was had, and no charges were ever made; but it seems most probable that the Prince, seeing in him a possible dangerous rival, suspected him of disloyalty and sought to forestall any treasonable act. Many powerful friends interceded for him, but the Prince remained inexorable, and it was three years and a half before he was released upon petition from the Diet supported by almost the whole nobility. His extensive lands were confiscated and he was perpetually interned on the one small estate left to him.

During all his public life Pécsi had been outwardly and nominally a Unitarian,⁸¹ and doubtless did all possible to keep the law from falling heavily upon his brethren. Soon after his imprisonment the Diet in 1622 passed a new and severe law against Judaism,⁸² and ordered prosecution of its adherents; but a war just then broke out, and was so absorbing that no attempt was made to enforce it so long as Bethlen lived; while his successor, George Rákóczy I, also had his hands too full of larger troubles to pay any attention to Sabbatarians until 1635, when the Diet again passed severe laws against them, for the sixth time re-affirming all the older laws.⁸³ Thus for more than ten peaceful years after his release from prison Pécsi, who during his confinement had

⁸¹ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, x, 14.

⁸² Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, viii, 108.

⁸³ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, ix, 415.

much occupied himself with thoughts of religion and the reading of the Bible, was able in his retirement to give himself almost entirely to the service of his religion, and to become practically the founder, as Eössi had been the pioneer, of Sabbatarianism. He worked privately and quietly, collected a fine library, and made a translation of the Psalms with commentary which was widely circulated in manuscript, and shows wide and accurate scholarship. After Bethlen's death he regained his full freedom, much of his property was restored, and he enjoyed wide influence. By his example and his numerous writings he promoted his faith amazingly, and within two years the two counties around him were full of reviving Sabbatarian churches, until the land was said to be fairly inundated with Judaism, which was said also to be rife at Kolozsvár.³⁴ It found followers among all classes, not only servants, peasants and artisans, but also public officials and both the lower and the higher nobility.

By the time when severe persecution was renewed in 1638, the Sabbatarians had grown so numerous and so confirmed in spirit that like true martyrs for conscience' sake they let the law take its course. At the term of the judicial court at Deés in that year nearly 1,000 men were sentenced, not counting many that were tried later and hundreds that were imprisoned, and the yet larger number of women that forfeited their property.³⁵ When the blow at length fell upon Pécsi, he received it without shrinking. He was sentenced to death and loss of all his property.³⁶ But before the sentence could be executed, Pécsi with his whole family, like other leading Sabbatarians, took the only way of escape left to them, and joined the Reformed Church—'whether seriously or not,' says the chronicler, 'only God knows.'³⁷ His remaining years were spent in poverty, and he died in 1643.³⁸ In the final effort to exterminate Sabbatarianism, those under prosecution were required to conform to one of the four received religions. Those that had been

³⁴ Cf. Geleji, *Titkok*, p. 271.

³⁵ Cf. Kohn, *Sabbatharier*, p. 199. The sentences to death or imprisonment were almost always remitted, but confiscation of property was uniformly enforced. *Id. op.*, pp. 209, 216 f.

³⁶ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, x, 182-190.

³⁷ Cf. Kohn, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

³⁸ Cf. Kohn, *op. cit.*, p. 225. Also Baron Zsigmond Kemény's historical romance, *A Rajongók* (the Fanatics), in which Pécsi is the hero, and the sufferings of the Sabbatarians are described. Miklós Josika's novels tell of persecutions under the Báthoris and the Rákóczis.

Unitarians generally revived their membership; but the Reformed also secured many new members from this source by the process of accusing them to Judaism. Thus in many towns where Unitarians had been in the majority the Reformed suddenly surpassed them and appropriated the churches and schools that had hitherto belonged to the Unitarians.

The history of the Sabbatarians runs from now on quite separate from that of the Unitarians.³⁹ But it may be of interest to record here that for nearly two and a half centuries more, despite all defections and persecutions, they still maintained a more or less secret existence, even when outwardly belonging to the Reformed Church. Their further history is an unbroken succession of oppressions and persecutions, brightened by an occasional period of revival. In the eighteenth century Calvinistic persecution was succeeded by Catholic, which some now escaped by going over to the Catholic Church instead of to the Reformed. Even the Toleration Edict of Joseph II in 1781 gave them no recognition, but only fresh persecution. Their numbers gradually grew less, and by the middle of the eighteenth century there remained only one Sabbatarian congregation, in the remote little village of Bözöd Ujfalu, lying in a narrow mountain valley between Maros-Vásárhely and Székely-Keresztur.⁴⁰ Finally in 1867, when the Hungarian Diet decreed the emancipation of the Jews, the Sabbatarians here at long last, after 280 years of more or less secretive life, at once took measures openly to adopt the Jewish faith, and in due time were constituted a proselyte Jewish congregation, with a membership of 136 souls, who had now formally withdrawn from their previous membership in the Catholic or the Reformed Church. They were extremely poor, but received some assistance from sympathizers in the larger Jewish congregations in Hungary or elsewhere. Their subsequent history has been that of gradual decline, and their historian's closing word about them a half-century ago (1893) was that at no distant time this little remnant of Sabbatarianism would have completely disappeared.⁴¹

In the five years or so after the death of Gabriel Bethlen in 1629 the Unitarians enjoyed a brief period of comparative peace. But when George Rákóczy I had settled the more urgent problems of his ad-

³⁹ Cf. *Keresztény Magvető*, xiii (1878), 362-366; xiv (1879), 35; xvi (1881), 323; xvii (1882), 108, 217; Kohn, *Sabbatharier*, p. 232 f.

⁴⁰ Cf. Adolf Dux, *Aus Ungarn* (Leipzig, 1880), 270 f; Kohn, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

⁴¹ Cf. Kohn, *Sabbatharier*, pp. 269-296.

ministration he gave serious attention as defender of the faith to the religious interests of the country, and with all the zeal of a bigot he began in 1638 that drastic persecution of the Sabbatarians spoken of above. Of all those convicted the sentence of death was executed on only one,⁴² a goldsmith of Kolozsvár named János Toroczka, son of the late Unitarian Superintendent. He had become a fanatical Sabbatarian, and in his excited state he spoke of Jesus in terms that were judged to be blasphemy. He was therefore condemned to suffer the punishment decreed by the Mosaic law (Lev. xxiv. 15), and was stoned to death at Deés by five Gypsies, whom it was customary to employ to execute capital punishment. His wife also was pilloried at Kolozsvár and driven out of the city. The Reformed court preacher expressed great satisfaction with this 'righteous judgment'.⁴³ The Unitarians were inevitably judged to be more or less involved in the taint of Sabbatarianism, and Rákóczi was all too ready to investigate their compliance with the laws about religion, especially since the Reformed were repeatedly complaining of them. It was, however, a quarrel among the Unitarians themselves that gave him occasion to inquire into their affairs.

One Matthias Ráv, a Saxon by nation, son of a Kolozsvár Councilman, whose overbearing manner had made him unpopular when he sought high office, had been minister of the Saxon Unitarian church at Kolozsvár before 1629, but his church had opposed his wish to introduce various changes in church affairs. Disappointed in this, he began to stir up quarrels in the church, and also without the knowledge of his colleagues he made a secret visit to Poland to attend the synod at Raków in 1629. There he reported that in the Transylvania church the administration was feeble and its discipline lax. This charge was accepted as true, since it agreed with what they had recently learned from other sources (perhaps from Radecki), and the synod therefore sent the brethren at Kolozsvár an earnest letter, showing fraternal concern, and expressing a wish for an annual exchange of letters and visits for mutual benefit. The letter was signed by the six most eminent ministers in the church.⁴⁴ The history of the period shows that there was much ground for Ráv's complaint, and he may not deserve the abuse that was heaped upon him; but it is also true that he had inherited his father's

⁴² Though another died as a result of flogging.

⁴³ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, x, 203, Geleji, *Tükör*, pref., Kohn, *op. cit.* p. 217 ff., Uzoni *História*, II, 984.

⁴⁴ Cf. Uzoni, *História*, II, 767-769.

haughty nature, and was a man of restless ambition for influential station in the church. He had however been twice disappointed in his hope of being chosen Superintendent, as also of being appointed chief Pastor; and at last he was relieved of his pastorate of the Saxon church in 1633. When a Superintendent was again to be elected in 1636 Ráv tried again and was once more disappointed when Daniel Beke, who had been Superintendent of the Udvárhely district, was chosen in preference to him. Ráv now sought to relieve his feeling of frustration by entering upon a course of mean revenge. He questioned the legality of the election, and for nearly a year delayed Beke's confirmation, as well as blocked his appointment as chief Pastor at Kolozsvár. He also formed a faction in the Kolozsvár church and beset the Prince with charges that the Unitarians were innovators, and Beke an apostate and a heretic. The Prince pressed the church for some statement of what the Unitarians believed about Jesus Christ, and instituted an investigation on his own account. At length, after a year of various meetings of the church authorities as well as of the Diet, the officers and ministers of the churches and their leading men were ordered to be present at a special meeting of the Diet at Deés, some thirty miles north of Kolozsvár.

Here Ráv and his party presented their charges of innovation, while Beke in defence of the churches presented a confession of their faith which had been adopted a few weeks before at a general meeting of the churches at Gyulafehérvár. To satisfy the opposition at Kolozsvár, who urged a more detailed and full definition of their faith, the *consensus ministrorum* which had been subscribed at Kolozsvár under Hunyadi in 1579 was also presented as representing the official belief of the churches.⁴⁵ The members of the Diet then deliberated the matter for seven days. It was realized that it was a critical hour in the history of the Unitarian Church. Many were apprehensive of being as drastically persecuted as the Sabbatarians had been, and of losing their standing as one of the received religions. Some at once forsook their church and went over to the Reformed rather than take any chances. But a Unitarian noble of the highest standing appealed to the company for fair treatment of his religion, assuring them that it was not a quarrel in-

⁴⁵ For the *Consensus* see Uzoni *Historia* II, 978 f., Bod *Historia* I, 451, II, 304-306, Wallace, *Antiquities* III, 556 f. cf. *supra* p. 86. For the confessions referred to above, see Uzoni, *Historia* II, 977 f., Bod, *Historia* II, 303 f.

volving the church as a whole but an affair of a few quarrelsome individuals. The main discussion was finally narrowed down to the one point as to the adoration of Christ, and a formal agreement was then drawn up in detail as a settlement agreeable to both parties—the famous *Complanatio Deesiana*, or Deés agreement.⁴⁶ The document was voted by the Diet (the Unitarians excepted), and was given the force of law, and signed by the Prince and 57 others, including Beke, Ráv, and the chief Pastor of Kolozsvár.

This document gave the Unitarian belief a fuller and clearer definition than hitherto, and was calculated to obviate any further controversy as to the divinity, invocation or adoration of Christ, and to close the door to any spread of Sabbatarianism or semi Judaism. Apart from a single incidental use of the word 38 years before,⁴⁷ the *Complanatio* is notable for the fact that it employs the term *Unitarius* not less than twenty times, thus effectually confirming this as the accepted name of the confession. Apart from the main doctrinal question, it provided that infant baptism should be practiced, and the Lord's Supper duly observed; that Beke should be installed in his office; that all recent quarrels should be forgotten and complaints dropped; that the revised confession and *consensus* and the rules of church discipline should be adopted and observed;⁴⁸ and that a catechism for children should be compiled and taught. If any Unitarian violated any of these regulations he should be punished not by his church but by the supreme civil government of the land, and if any were proved guilty of starting any innovation against the religion as now amended, he should be branded with perpetual infidelity; and no one should print a Unitarian book save by permission of the Prince.

Thus the Deés agreement, while allowing the Unitarians free exercise of their religion, purposely narrowed its freedom of belief and teaching by requiring them to abide within the limits originally authorized and now newly defined. All four of the received religions were thus limited. How willingly the Unitarians consented to the terms of the settlement may be questioned, but at all events they had no alternative if they

⁴⁶ Cf. *Magyar Emlékek*, x, 174–181, Uzoni, *Historia*, II, 979–983, Bod, *Historia* II, 306–310, Sándor Szilágyi, 'Az Unitáriusok . . . s a deési Complanatio,' etc. (The Unitarians and the Deés agreement), *Keresztény Magvető*, IX (1874), 150 ff.

⁴⁷ Cf. *supra*, p. 100

⁴⁸ The items thus adopted were those already in use, and no new one was composed until 1670, nor was any allowed to be printed until 1693. Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, 569

were to continue to exist at all. The *Complanatio* remains to this day theoretically the official standard of the Unitarian Church in Transylvania; but time has brought its relief, not through changes in the body of belief and practice, but through more elastic interpretation — a process well known to all religious bodies theoretically bound to fixed formulas. As a spokesman of the church long ago declared, 'in recent times, more favorable to free investigation, many of our doctrines and articles of faith receive a freer and more complete expression, which formerly on account of circumstances of oppression might not be so clearly expressed.'⁴⁹ As for Ráv, it will have been noted that in the final settlement he practically won his contention, which had been for more conservatism in belief and stricter discipline in practice. He signed with the rest, faithfully kept his promise of subordination to the discipline of the church, was restored to his office, and lived the rest of his life in the full odor of sanctity.

Besides setting the affairs of the Unitarian Church in order, the Diet undertook to adjust civil affairs at Kolozsvár. Ever since the time of King John, Kolozsvár had been so overwhelmingly Unitarian that the civil government had been administered solely by Unitarians. But in the past half-century the Unitarian cause there, due to a combination of civil wars, pestilence and religious persecution, had suffered heavy losses, while the number of the Reformed had correspondingly increased, since the Calvinistic Princes offered free homes to some thousands as an inducement to repopulate the wasted city. They had already been granted three of the city's churches for public worship, and a recent plan of theirs for getting control of the lately completed great church and of the city Council had but narrowly failed of accomplishment.⁵⁰ But the Diet now ordered that the Reformed should henceforth enjoy 25 of the 100 seats in the Council, and should have access also to certain higher offices. With their affairs thus settled, and causes of discord removed, the Unitarians now saw somewhat happier days under the government of the Reformed Princes. During more than sixty years of almost constant persecution since the days of King John, they had been winnowed of elements of weakness and had developed qualities of heroic faithfulness that were henceforth to characterize their future. They were indeed still to bear the burdens that fall to an unpopular

⁴⁹ Moses Pap, in 1875, as quoted by Rath, *Siebenbürgen*, p. 142.

⁵⁰ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 655.

religious minority, but though suffering minor oppressions they now took energetic steps toward recovery, and worked unweariedly to repair their losses and build up their church. In his long service of twenty five years as Superintendent, Beke held frequent synods and confirmed the churches in good order. No longer spending themselves in acrimonious controversy, they gave the more attention to practical Christianity among their own members. Their ministers were well educated at Kolozsvár or abroad, and their churches again began to grow and multiply.

After Deés, the rest of the rule of George Rákóczy I until his death in 1648, and the most of that of his successor, George Rákóczy II (1648-1660), gave the churches a welcome period of convalescence and in creasing strength, broken only by such misfortunes as affected the whole population. The latter was an intense Calvinist, and would have been glad to make the whole Province Calvinist, though he did nothing worse than to annoy the other three confessions. But in 1655 the Unitarians received another blow, being required to yield to the Reformed equal membership with them in the Kolozsvái Council. In the same year there was a great conflagration which destroyed both the Saxon and the Hungarian Unitarian church in the square, and many other adjacent buildings belonging to the church besides 1,800 dwellings, so that but twenty years after they had been repaired all the church buildings but one school were again in ashes. The fire was found to have been incendiary, and to have been set by two from the Jesuit school in the suburbs, who later suffered torture and death for their crime. But for two months Unitarian students stood guard at night lest the rest of the city also be set on fire.⁵¹

All other troubles, however, were as nothing when compared with those that resulted from Rákóczy's ill fated invasion of Poland in 1657. As already related in the previous section of this history,⁵² in the course of the war between Poland and Sweden, Rákóczy was persuaded to enter it as Sweden's ally. Lured by the hope of winning as his reward the crown of Poland (which his father, mindful of Stephen Báthory in the century before, had already been coveting), urged also by 'Arian' nobles from Poland, who had much to hope from Sweden's success,⁵³ and deaf to the opposition of both Sultan and Emperor, Rákóczy rushed

⁵¹ Cf. Uzon, *Historia* II, 656, 670

⁵² *v. supra* vol. I, p. 472

⁵³ Cf. Georg Kraus, *Siebenburgische Chronik 1608-1665* (*Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, Abt. I, Bde. 3, 4), Wien, 1864, III, 241, 276, 284

headlong into the war, won some early successes, and was placed in command of Kraków. But when the fortunes of war forced Sweden to withdraw to the north, Rákóczy was left without support, and as enemies were pressing him he had to abandon Kraków. His forces left to fight alone were now overwhelmed by hosts of Cossacks and Tatars swarming in from the East. His army of 50,000 was soon cut to pieces. The flower of Transylvania's nobility perished, the commandant at Kraków was able to bring home but 3,000 of his command, and Rákóczy himself with a handful of attendants barely escaped with his life.⁵⁴ The Sultan, angry that his counsel had been disregarded, demanded that Rákóczy be removed from power, and ordered the election of another Prince. He refused to resign, and the land was invaded by Austria on one side and by Wallacks, Turks and Tatars on the other, who taking advantage of the country's prostrate condition wasted it with fire and sword, seized and burned towns, killed large numbers, and carried many away captive into slavery. In three years more than 100,000 in Transylvania perished. Kolozsvár, the Unitarian capital, as the richest city, suffered most severely of all. The inhabitants were forced to pay the enemy 80,000 imperials, and the treasures of the Unitarian church and the wealth of private persons were also seized. Then the plague ravaged the whole land, and the Unitarians at Kolozsvár died by scores daily. For two years they had no Superintendent, no synods were held, and the number of students at the college was reduced to nine.⁵⁶

It was at just this period of their utmost affliction that the Unitarians of Kolozsvár were called on to receive their exiled brethren from Poland. Relations between the two churches had grown increasingly intimate since the time when feeling over the case of Dávid began to subside. The church at Kolozsvár had again and again drawn preachers and teachers from the church in Poland, and students from Transylvania since the downfall of Raków had more and more frequently crossed the border to Łuckawice for their higher education. Moreover,

⁵⁴ Cf. Johannes Bethlen *Kezium Transylvanicum huius quatuor* (s. 1, 1664), lib. II, sec. 2, 3, Bod, *Historia* II 251.

⁵⁵ Cf. Bethlen *op. cit.* p. 62.

⁵⁶ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, II, 990.

⁵⁷ Among others, Christian Francken Rector of the school at Chmielnik, to be Professor at Kolozsvár, 1585-99, Valentin Radecki Rector of the school at Łuckawice, to be Pastor of the Saxon church 1605, Superintendent 1616-32, and chief Pastor 1622-32, Joachim Stegmann Rector at Rakow, to be Pastor of the Saxon church, 1632-33, Adam Franck Rector at Rakow to be Pastor of the Saxon church, 1633-55, Valentin Baumgart Rector at Łuckawice, to be Rector at Kolozsvár, 1648 and chief Pastor, 1661-72.

since Dávid's death no important theological work by a Unitarian, save Enyedi's *Explicationes*, had been published in Transylvania, whose ministers had to depend on the Polish Brethren for works in defence of their faith. Their catechisms show distinct evidence of the influence of the Racovian Catechism, and their accepted theology was therefore Socinian. Despite the necessitous times, the Transylvanian churches thus had every reason for giving all possible help to the exiles, and they gave it without stint.

The exiles,⁵⁸ with their train of 300 wagons, after crossing the frontier applied to Achacius Barcsai, who for a brief period after the deposition of Rákóczy was Prince of Transylvania, for permission to enter his territory, but this was refused. Uncertain as to their next step they so journeyed for a time under the protection of the mild-spirited Francis Rhédei near his castle at Huszt in Máramoros County in eastern Hungary, where they were unexpectedly attacked by freebooting Austrian soldiers, and were robbed of nearly all their possessions, and of the very clothes they wore, almost to downright nakedness. Some now turned about in discouragement and sought a home in East Prussia, but the rest remained steadfast in their purpose. A new Prince had now been elected, János Kemény, and to him they addressed a fresh appeal for safe conduct.⁵⁹ The brethren at Kolozsvár used all pains to win his indulgence for them, emphasizing their pitiable condition, and assuring him that the exiles belonged to the fellowship of the Unitarians, and that there was hence no reason for denying them the lawful privileges of the country. So they at last found shelter and legal protection when hardly any other ruler in Europe would have allowed them to remain. The ill-will of the Trinitarians still pursued them, denying that they should be tolerated in the country; and two years later they were still so apprehensive that they felt moved to address to Prince Michael Apafi an anxious petition begging as exiles for conscience' sake that they be not forbidden the country, but be kindly received.⁶⁰ They were not further molested.

⁵⁸ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, II, 781-789, Kraus, *Chronik*, IV, 149, Benko, *Transsylvania* II, 582-584, Elek Jakab, 'Magyar Lengyel Unitárius Erintkezések' (Intercourse between Hungarian and Polish Unitarians), *Századok* (Budapest), XXVI (1892), 298-316, 474-494, Székely, *Történetei*, p. 208 f., Lubieniecius, *Historia*, p. 297 f.

⁵⁹ Dated January 19, 1661. Cf. Elek Jakab, *Okleveltar*, II, 375 f.

⁶⁰ Dated March 7, 1663. Signed by their Pastor and 23 others. Original Ms, as well as various records of the exiles, are in the archives of the Unitarian College at Kolozsvár.

When it was learned late in the winter that the exiles were at last approaching, the brethren at Kolozsvár went out to meet them, taking wagons to transport the ill or feeble, and food and clothing for all. About 300 in all (the number is variously given) survived to reach Kolozsvár; but although their hosts themselves had been greatly impoverished by the great conflagration and by two plundering invasions of Turks and Tatars, they devoted themselves to the poor sufferers with fraternal care, bringing them within the safe protection of their city's walls, lodging them in their own homes, and making them guests at their tables. As the burden threatened to be heavier than they could bear alone, the local Consistory sent a circular letter to all the churches in the Province urgently soliciting aid for the exiles. But exhausted as they were by their terrible privations and hardships, they fell an easy prey to the plague when it began again to rage in the summer; and after it had done its work only a third of their number remained.⁶¹ The greater part of them made their new home at Kolozsvár, and a modest house was secured for them which served at once as a place of worship and a place of residence for their Pastors.⁶² Worship was held here in the Polish language, conducted by a minister in Polish costume. Other Polish colonies were soon established, doubtless in villages on the estates of Unitarian noblemen in the Province.⁶³ The most important of these was at Betlen, about fifteen miles east of Deés. It had a minister of its own for some time, but ceased its separate existence in 1745, when the members remaining were absorbed in the Unitarian church. One of the ministers toward the end of the seventeenth century removed to the exile colony in East Prussia, and a correspondence was kept up for some time between the two colonies; while students for the ministry came from there to Kolozsvár for their education.

The exiles received some aid from the brethren they had left behind in Poland. Achacy Taszycki, owner of the estate of Łuckawice, who had

⁶¹ Only 30 heads of families, says Jakab, *Magyar-Lengyel*, p. 381; others say only 30 individuals.

⁶² The house is still in existence at No. 13 Belső Monostor Utca (Strada Memorandului), near the great square.

⁶³ One was at Bánffy Hunyad, about 30 miles west of Kolozsvár; one at Adámos on the Küküllő, about fifteen miles southwest of Maros-Vásárhely, and a small one was at Árkos in the Szekerland, north of Sepsí-Szent György. In these places the Poles being few worshiped with the Hungarian congregation, though holding separate services when they were able, and observing baptism and the Lord's Supper after the Polish usage. But this practice was soon discouraged by the synod for fear of schism arising.

nominally accepted Catholic baptism rather than exile himself from his converted children, left a generous bequest for the exiled brethren in Transylvania, of which a part was designated for the assistance of the poor brethren at Betlen, and a part for Andrew Wiszowaty, great-great-grandson of Socinus. The more fortunate exiles in Holland were also appealed to and, doubtless with the cooperation of Remonstrant sympathizers there, sent the generous sum of over 5,000 Dutch florins.⁶¹ In 1707 some of the Poles sought to better their condition by migrating to northeastern Hungary; and in 1710 the exiles, perhaps with the encouragement of the gifts mentioned, got together a fund to help them to go back to their old homes in Poland; but when some of them made the venture they were so sorely disappointed with what they found that they soon returned to Transylvania.⁶²

There were in all ten Polish ministers settled over the exile congregations, of whom one was the Andrew Wiszowaty above mentioned. The congregation at Kolozsvár inevitably declined in time as its members died or became assimilated to the surrounding population; and some quarrels broke out among the survivors. Their last minister was Izsák Szaknovics, and the last Polish sermon at Kolozsvár was preached in 1792. By this time the survivors had become well magyarized, and they sold their meeting-house and in the following year united with the Hungarian church. Their descendants became loyal citizens of their adopted country, and contributed to it some fine scholars and devoted ministers. Of all these none is remembered with more honor and gratitude than Pál Áugusztinovics, the church's greatest benefactor. He was born in 1763 at Szent Abrahám, a descendant of the Polish Unitarians who had settled at Kolozsvár. His father was a minister, and he himself graduated with distinction from the college at Kolozsvár. He devoted himself to the law, and showed such promise that the Consistory aided him in starting in his profession. He held high public office in the courts at Vienna for a generation, and enjoyed the full trust of the Emperor Francis I. He was also Chief Curator of the Unitarian Church,

⁶¹ Cf. Elek Jakab, 'Adalékok a Magyar és lengyel Unitáriusok közötti viszony,' etc (Ancient relations between Hungarian and Polish Unitarians), *Keresztény Magveto*, xxix (1894), 316-324; and the same author's article in *Századok* above mentioned, pp. 1-43. Domokos Simén, 'Origo piarum foundationum apud Polonos Claudiopoli collectos,' *Keresztény Magveto*, xi (1876), 335-339; Tadeusz Grabowski, *Literatura Aryańska w Polsce* (Arian Literature in Poland), Kraków, 1908, pp. 346, 488.

⁶² Cf. Kanyaró, *Unitáriusok*, p. 223 f.

and was devoted to its interests; and when he died in 1837, over 175 years after the date of the exile, he showed his gratitude to it in a residuary bequest of 100,000 florins, almost more than all the rest of the church's endowment funds taken together.⁶⁶

The affairs of Transylvania for a generation after the fall of Rákóczy went from bad to worse; for the rest of the Transylvanian Princes were little better than puppets of the Sultan. He relentlessly exacted his annual tribute, and politically and socially the land was chaotic and poverty-stricken. Prince János Kemény in his short rule sought the protection of the Emperor Leopold, and introduced into Kolozsvár a German garrison which for three years outraged the richest city in the Province, and impoverished its citizens by its ceaseless exactions. When the Unitarian Pastor and some of the leading citizens laid moving complaints before the Emperor, no attention was paid to them.⁶⁷ Under Prince Michael Apafi I (1663-90), a devoted Calvinist, oppression of the Unitarians continued. Taking advantage of the depleted condition to which they had been reduced, he shamelessly allowed himself to be led by his ministers to exclude Unitarians from membership in the Diet in 1670.

During all these years of unremitting persecution which, aiming constantly to strengthen the Calvinist cause at the expense of the Unitarians, went to all lengths that bigotry and intolerance could invent short of denying them the freedom of worship that the Constitution guaranteed, they were incalculably steadied and strengthened by the enlightened wisdom of their new Superintendent, who had come to a seat that had during three years been vacant. Boldizsár Koncz was of an ancient and distinguished Szekler family, had been educated at Kolozsvár, and after being chief Pastor there was chosen Superintendent in 1663. In his term of twenty one years he worked indefatigably at fundamentals of church life. He at once began to foster schools, one by each village church, and to raise the standard of teaching by having regular examinations of the teachers. He also labored to improve the financial administration of the churches, and to encourage stricter discipline of the members and the clergy. The churches responded finely, and their schools were brought up to a high standard of excellence.

⁶⁶ Cf. Áron Buzogány, 'Augusztinowics Pál életrajza,' etc. (The Life of P. A.), *Keresztény Magvető*, IV (1864), 11-36.

⁶⁷ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, II, 661, 665.

They began again to flourish. In the past century their numbers had fallen off from 500 or 600 to only some 200. Now recovery began, and old churches were repaired or new ones built. Regular annual synods were revived, and many important questions were discussed in them; and the new catechism ordered at Deés was at last prepared, though it was not until some time later that publication was allowed.

Shortly before the death of Koncz an unanticipated event occurred which changed the whole face of affairs both political and religious. The Turkish power, to which Transylvania had for a century and a half stood in more or less unwilling vassalage, after a period of slow decline made a determined effort to push its conquests into western Europe, and even reached the walls of Vienna. Here the Christian nations rallied, and in 1683, under the brilliant leadership of King Jan Sobieski of Poland, the Turks were defeated, and henceforth their decline was rapid. Relieved of danger from that quarter Transylvania now sought peace and protection from the West. In 1686 Prince Michael Apafi II submitted himself and Transylvania to the protection of the Emperor Leopold I as King of Hungary, under the explicit condition that 'the four received confessions shall never in any way, at any time, or under any pretext be disturbed in the free practice of their religion, and the old laws shall be held sacred.'⁶⁸ Henceforth Transylvania was to be an integral part of Hungary. Oppression of the Unitarians by Calvinist rulers was at an end, to be succeeded by an ever more deliberate persecution of all Protestantism by the Catholic government of their new masters.

⁶⁸ Treaty of June 28, 1686; cf. Johannes Borhis, *Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche Ungarns* (Nördlingen, 1861), p. 494.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH UNDER AUSTRIAN OPPRESSION, 1691-1780

THE INCORPORATION OF TRANSYLVANIA in one government with Hungary, after striving to maintain an independent national existence for a hundred and fifty years, during which it was buffeted between Austria and Turkey, introduced a new era in both its political and its religious life. It did not, however, realize the hopes of the people that their position would be substantially improved, and that now both civil and religious peace would at length be enjoyed. Leopold I had been intended and educated for the Church, but the death of his brother unexpectedly thrust crowns upon him, and he was chosen King of Hungary at fifteen and elected Emperor at eighteen. He had no marked talents for government, but he cherished two predominant interests, to wield absolute power, and at all costs to convert Hungary to the Catholic faith. He therefore early determined to destroy the Protestant religion in his dominions and to make Hungary a *regnum Marianum*, a Kingdom of the Holy Virgin. In pursuit of these ends he was a mere puppet in the hands of unscrupulous advisers, and his long reign (1657-1705) has been well called the golden age of the Jesuits. His rule in Hungary had already been marked by merciless persecution of his Calvinist subjects. His Jesuit advisers encouraged him not to keep faith with Protestants, but to consider that his duties to God and the Church took precedence over any promises however solemn made to heretics, who were poisonous and dangerous enemies to the true religion. In pursuance of this principle he sent 41 Protestant ministers to the galleys of the Viceroy of Naples in 1674, and when a year later they were released as a result of the intervention of the Dutch government, only 26 survived.¹

It was as King of Hungary and not as Emperor of Austria (Transylvanians have always insisted on observing this distinction) that he

¹ Cf. Lampe, *Historia*, pp. 872-919.

was in 1690 elected Prince of Transylvania; and in the preliminary negotiations looking toward the submission of Transylvania to the protection of his Majesty, Prince Michael Apafi, who was a Protestant, remembering the persecutions of his brethren in Hungary, tried in the articles of the treaty to take all possible precautions for the security and freedom of the four received religions in his country. It was therefore provided in the original treaty in 1685, reaffirmed in that of 1687, and restipulated in that of 1688, that the four received religions and their ministers should forever be left undisturbed in their rights, usages and privileges hitherto enjoyed.² The Protestants in Transylvania under the ensuing Catholic Austrian rule did indeed fare much better on the whole than their brethren in Hungary. But when the stipulations of the treaties were finally embodied in a Diploma to be signed by Leopold himself (the celebrated *Diploma Leopoldinum*, dated December 4, 1691),³ it was found that additions had been made in the interest of the Catholics, which were to prove the source of many religious troubles. The stipulations of the Diploma were indeed never seriously observed, and they began to be ignored as early as 1695. Under the added measures introduced into it, the Catholics at Kolozsvár and elsewhere were to be allowed to recover or rebuild the churches and schools that they had held before the Reformation. Even before the Diploma was published the Jesuits had already set their hearts on recovering at Kolozsvár a church from the Reformed and a school from the Unitarians, and at Gyulafehérvár the long vacated Catholic church. Their first efforts to recover these by force were futile; whereupon rumors were set afloat that the three Protestant religions had rebelled against the Empire, and that their churches were to be seized by military force and given to the Catholics. A conference was therefore sought with them in order to learn their demands. It lasted almost three months, during a Diet at Hermannstadt in the spring and summer of 1692.⁴ The result of the protracted negotiations was that the Catholics were given one of the Reformed churches and a Unitarian school at

² Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 680-689; Bod, *Historia*, ii, 191-194. Quatuor receptae religiones nullo unquam modo, tempore, et praetextu, in suo libero exercitio turbentur, sed omnes ecclesiae, templa, scholae, parochiae, in suis usibus, cultibus, terminis, proventibus, privilegiis et consuetudinibus, hactenus usitatis, ita etiam eorum ministri, in suo ministerio honore et libertate intacte conserventur.

³ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 695-699; Bod, *Historia*, ii, 197-203.

⁴ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 701-729; Bod, *Historia*, ii, 204, 207.

Kolozsvár, and the vacant Catholic church at Gyulafehérvár, together with several other privileges. Payment, however, was to be made to the Unitarians for the school that they had ceded.

It was at just this time of wide reconstruction in both State and church that an efficient new Superintendent, following the brief terms of several predecessors, came to lead the troubled Unitarian Church. The long term of Michael Almási (1692-1724) was marked by vicissitudes.⁵ After being educated abroad he had been professor and pastor at Kolozsvár. In his term as Superintendent, though one new church was built there, the Unitarians lost to the Catholics at Kolozsvár three churches and three schools with adjacent buildings; a church and parsonage at Torda, and churches in various other places. There was, however, one encouraging gain. It had long been a grievance of the Unitarians that their Superintendents were not permitted to supervise their churches among the Szeklers of the Háromszék; and in 1630, after the death of Gabriel Bethlen, they addressed a complaint to his widow, the Princess Catharine of Brandenburg, in answer to which she issued a diploma permitting their District Superintendent to accompany the Reformed Superintendent in his visitations and subordinate to him, in order to ordain ministers and settle quarrels. The Reformed Superintendent Dajka, however, evaded this provision, so that after he had ordained Unitarian ministers himself, their own Superintendent formally ordained them again in their own synod.⁶ After over sixty years, however, with the change of government, a fresh complaint and appeal was made to George Bánfi, asking that as a matter of justice the Unitarians might be under the supervision of their own Superintendent, and the request was granted in 1692.⁷ The right of the Unitarians to have a press was also approved by the Diet in the same year, and one was therefore at great expense brought from Danzig, for which many of the members made sacrificial contributions. It was serviceable to the churches for over twenty years, largely in printing text-books for their schools, but it was at length seized by a government grown bitterly oppressive.⁸

Encouraged by these signs of greater toleration, Almási gave diligent

⁵ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 780, 1014-1022.

⁶ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 911 f.

⁷ Cf. Uzoni, *op. cit.*, ii, 916-918.

⁸ Cf. Székely, *Történetei*, p. 163; Uzoni, *op. cit.*, i, 571-579.

attention to the inner life of the churches and held regular synods, at which many questions were earnestly discussed concerning the doctrine and discipline of the churches. But any considerable progress of the Church at large was seriously interfered with by the crushing blow that fell upon Kolozsvár in 1697 in the last and greatest of the conflagrations that marked the second half of the century. The city was still largely built of wood, and a fire once started, when fanned by a high wind, was soon beyond control. On this occasion two thirds of the whole city was laid in ashes, including three Unitarian churches and one Reformed, two schools (one of which had but lately been rebuilt to replace the one previously ceded to the Catholics), and various other buildings belonging to the Church. The rich were reduced to poverty and the poor to utter destitution.⁹ Their resources had recently been heavily drawn upon to purchase the new press, and they were therefore forced to make urgent appeals for aid from the outside. The Superintendent wrote letters to all the churches in Transylvania, and the Kolozsvár Consistory sent the Rector of their school to Holland to lay their pitiful state before sympathetic brethren among the Remonstrants and Collegiants, to whom the Transylvanian Unitarians were already known through the young ministers who were in the habit of going thither to finish their studies.¹⁰

Leopold at first observed in good faith the provisions of the Diploma he had granted, relating to the rights of the received religions in Transylvania. But as he grew aged and became more and more the pliant tool of the Jesuits, they determined to move more rapidly toward the ends they had in mind, and took the initiative themselves. In 1699 therefore the Cardinal Archbishop of Gran, as Primate of Austria, addressed letters to the Unitarians of Kolozsvár, as in the Emperor's name, demanding that within fifteen days they should give over to the Catholics the great church in the market-place which the Unitarians had but lately rebuilt after the great conflagration, the school that they

⁹ Cf. Uzon, *Historia*, II, 671-673.

¹⁰ Cf. Uzon, *op cit*, II, 676. Responses were prompt and generous. From the home churches 1,688 Hungarian florins were subscribed, besides generous gifts of material and sixteen months after the fire the new building was roofed in. From the churches in Holland there were given in the next year 9,500 florins. The correspondence is extant in the Remonstrant library at Rotterdam (Ms 529), and the elaborate letter of thanks, signed by the Superintendent and all the District Superintendents in the name of the churches, dated 1700 is given in Uzon, *op cit*, pp 677-679. Cf. also W. J. Kuhler, *Socinianisme in Nederland* (Leiden, 1912), p. 205.

had built a few years before, the minister's house and other buildings once belonging to the Catholics, and take in exchange a smaller Catholic church and school in the city. It was intimated that this would be an appropriate acknowledgment of favors already shown by Leopold, and that yet others might be expected if this wish were granted, but that if it were refused the consequences would be serious. The Unitarians stood aghast at being asked to surrender a church that they had held in undisputed possession since the time of King John, and that they had lately largely rebuilt, and they did not yield. Instead, they wrote such moving letters of supplication to influential persons about Leopold that their prayers availed, though as will soon be seen they were destined to lose their case a few years later by military violence.¹¹

Leopold's reign came to an end in 1705, when he was succeeded by his son, Joseph I, an enlightened ruler who in 1709 issued an edict forbidding persecution of Protestants, and who kept faith with them. But he died untimely after but six years, to be succeeded by his brother, Charles III (as Emperor, Charles VI). Charles's intentions were apparently good, and his policy was at first mild. He took the usual oath to maintain the rights and privileges of the four received religions, and issued proclamations assuring them of his good intentions; and as he was reforming the government and the courts his rule began with raising high hopes of enduring peace for the churches. Thus for the first four years of his reign the Unitarians enjoyed a measure of peace with the other religions. But the Catholic clergy were persistent in pressing their claims, and did this so incessantly and so strongly, magnifying the wickedness and danger of the Unitarian heretics, that Charles finally gave in and yielded to their demands. Thenceforth for two full generations there ensued for the Unitarians an unbroken reign of terror. Encroachments upon them were made wherever and whenever opportunity offered, and advantage was taken of local disturbances in divided communities, especially in remote districts where civil order was poorly maintained and violent means might be dared by the aggressors. This whole period was one of a general system of spoliation of the Unitarians. Their churches were taken and given to the Catholics, and their church endowments (ordinarily in landed property) were seized. No new churches might be built save by special permission, and

¹¹ For the correspondence, cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 1048-1056.

this was rarely to be had. More than once it appeared doubtful whether their Church would be able to survive at all.¹²

The first step toward a deliberate policy of repression and persecution was taken in 1716, when in spite of the fact that the Catholic Bishop had been proscribed in the time of Sigismund Báthory, and that Leopold had solemnly promised not to introduce another, Charles yielded to the urgency of General Stephen Steinville, military Governor of Transylvania, and installed a Bishop in the former see at Gyulafehérvár.¹³

As an example of occurrences that were now to become frequent throughout Transylvania, several instances may be cited, separated in time and space, of lawless aggressions against the Unitarians, encroachments that were steady and increasing after the Catholic Church in 1722 became the official State Church. Thus at Bágyon near Torda, and also at Szent Gerlicze southeast of Maros-Vásarhely, a Catholic mob attempted to seize the church by a surprise attack during a temporary absence of the men of the congregation; whereupon the Szekler women turned out and vigorously defended their village sanctuaries, the younger fighting desperately in the churchyard, while the old within the church prayed for their success.¹⁴ Again, in the remote village of Kálnok in the Háromszék strife broke out between Calvinists and Unitarians (1666), who were nearly equal in number. The Unitarians

¹² In order to have the right background for judging this period of persecution, it needs to be borne in mind that of old in Transylvania churches and schools had at first been built at public expense, and were thus the possession of the whole community. When the Reformation came the Catholics had in most communities been dispossessed by the overwhelming Protestant majority; for in all Transylvania there were only five towns in the Hungarian counties in which Catholic churches remained, besides those in four remote Szekler districts. Cf. József Ferencz, *Kleiner Unitarier-Spiegel* (Wien, 1879), p. 20. But as the religious complexion of the communities gradually changed after the death of King John and under the Catholic revival, and the Unitarians became proportionately weaker under the increasing pressure of persecution upon them, the other confessions naturally urged their claims to a share of the common church and school property in various communities. The Catholics moreover were disposed to claim that even when usurped by Protestants the churches had always remained the property of the Catholic Church, and to demand restitution whenever even a small proportion of the population asserted their claim. If the Catholic administration now supported their claim by force, the Unitarians would naturally feel unjustly deprived of what had for generations been regarded as theirs. With rights so mixed, and patience and consideration so seldom shown, violence was bound to occur, and the issue was likely often to be settled by superior force rather than by peaceable means.

¹³ Cf. Bod, *Historia*, iii, 213 f.

¹⁴ Cf. Chalmers, *Recollections*, p. 13.

held the church and the Reformed wished to have it. With the tacit approval of the Calvinist Prince Michael Apafi, the Captain of the local militia unexpectedly invaded the church at dead of night with an armed band. But the vigilant minister of a near-by church having learned what was afoot hastily collected all the adults of two congregations, both men and women, suddenly appeared at daybreak and raised the siege. The affair was reported to the Diet, and an enumeration was ordered of all the members of each of the churches concerned. Adroit means were taken to introduce additional members before the count was taken, and in the end it was found that the Reformed had a slight majority. The church was therefore decreed to them, and they were ordered to pay the Unitarians a certain sum judged due. Payment was never made, and the Unitarians had to build themselves a new stone church at their own expense.¹⁵

At the village of Körispatak in the same neighborhood, on the other hand, when the Reformed were unable to gain possession of the Unitarian church (1726) the Catholics prepared to seize it by force. While the Unitarian men, having got a rumor of the plan proposed, were thrown into consternation and were deliberating what to do, the women of the congregation armed themselves with sharpened stakes and surrounded the door; and when a messenger came from the Provost to demand surrender of the property, they drove him off with stones and threats. The method of force was now abandoned, and instead a legal claim was filed, on the ground that the church had been founded by a Roman Catholic community and hence belonged to the Catholic Church in general. The Unitarians replied that it was now in the possession of a legally recognized body, and belonged to the Unitarian Church of Transylvania, and they had no right to transfer it to any one. After a month the Catholics withdrew their claim, waiting for a better occasion in future, against which the Unitarians kept a vigilant watch.¹⁶

In other cases ejection of the Unitarians was accomplished under at least a pretence of legal procedure, or by soldiers in the exercise of military authority. Thus in 1721 the church of the strong congregation at Torda was lost. But the most devastating attack of all was committed in 1716 at Kolozsvár, as the strongest center of the Unitarian cause. It had long vexed the Catholics that though Transylvania was

¹⁵ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 920 f.

¹⁶ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 921.

now subject to a Catholic government, yet its largest and wealthiest city was still largely Unitarian and its largest church was the seat of Unitarian worship. As other means of gaining control had not been successful, it was now determined to use military force.¹⁷ Soon after the arrival of the new Bishop, General Steinville, by authority of the King, came to Kolozsvár with a large force of soldiers, quartered them in the homes of the leading Unitarian citizens, on whom he levied supplies and perpetrated various outrages, and plundered the houses of the ministers and teachers. One hundred and fifty houses were thus violated and ravaged for three days. The keys of the great church in the market-place were then demanded, and the building with all its contents was seized, as were two smaller churches.

For none of these was compensation ever made. The great church was then reconsecrated and refitted for Catholic use, and Catholic worship was formally instituted three days later. Unitarian worship there of course ceased at once, nor was even a funeral allowed for a Unitarian who had died at just this time. When on the Easter Sunday soon following the Unitarians met for worship in four other places, the Catholics were angered, and for fourteen days no public worship at all was permitted them, nor even any service in private homes, where if as many as three were found together they were liable to arrest. They protested, however, appealing to their constitutional rights as a received religion, and after two months the ban was lifted. During the days following the seizure of the church, drunken soldiers caroused in the houses they had taken, and treated Superintendent Almási with every conceivable indignity, insomuch that many of the Catholics were scandalized and some, seeing the heroic firmness with which the persecutions were borne, became Unitarians themselves, while none of the persecuted apostasized.

Besides the church building Steinville demanded all the documents guaranteeing and defining the rights of the Unitarians, as if to revise them; but once taken they were never returned. The crypt of the church was by long-standing custom used as a repository for articles of value belonging to the church or its members,¹⁸ and all the property

¹⁷ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 1097-1144; i, 575, 579.

¹⁸ From the time when Transylvania was liable any day to be suddenly raided by Tatars or Turks, the stone church of the village was the only place to which the inhabitants might flee for safety from the enemy, and it thus became a fortress, offer

there stored, although privately owned, was also taken. This included first of all the press which had been procured a few years before through private gifts, at a cost of 6,000 florins; also the books of a library and sundry tools and materials intended for the restoration of the adjoining smaller church. All this property, even if it were granted that upon the church itself the Catholics had some just claim, was now stolen outright. Repeated efforts were made to have the property restored, or at least reimbursement made. Complaints were lodged before the proper authorities, and a commission was appointed to consider the claims presented; but of its six members four were Catholics, some were not even Transylvanians, and not one was a Unitarian. The commission was in session two weeks, but all claims were disallowed, except that 2,000 florins was admitted as reimbursement for the press. Although appeal was thrice made to the Imperial court, no further relief was ever obtained. The total loss to the Unitarian community, including what they had expended in the past twenty years in rebuilding the church and otherwise, amounted to over 50,000 florins. From this crushing material blow the Unitarians never wholly recovered; but even under such pressure none as yet abandoned their faith, and gathering their congregations again in new places of worship they still clung loyally together.

As one item supporting the appeal that the Unitarians now made to the Emperor, a Confession of their faith was submitted to the court by a Unitarian Counsellor.¹⁹ This represented the Unitarian belief in its mildest and least offensive form, emphasizing its agreement with Scripture and the Apostles' Creed and passing over controverted points, in order to soften the animosity of the orthodox. It teaches the adoration and invocation of Christ, as one supernaturally born, acknowledges the divine authority of civil governments and teaches loyalty to them

surrounded by a high stone wall, which could withstand siege. Within this wall, or in the church itself, as a place of general safe-deposit, the people would store their most valuable treasures, their fine clothing, and even their staple provisions. The same tradition was sometimes followed even in towns where it was less necessary, and it is continued to this day in many of the rural villages.

¹⁹ *Confessio fidei Christianae secundum Unitarios*, etc. (Koložsvár, 1719), 7 pp., 40. Incorporated in Uzon, *Historia*, II, 1139 ff. This Confession was originally composed by Benedict Wiszowaty, minister to the exile church at Andreaswalde in East Prussia (whose son Andrew was minister to the exile church at Koložsvár, 1724-35), and was dedicated to the Elector of Brandenburg at a time when danger threatened the Unitarians under his government (*v. supra*, vol. I, p. 516, n. 14).

as a Christian duty. It takes baptism as an outward and visible sign of admission to the Church, and the Lord's Supper as a sacred memorial. Through faith in Christ our sins are forgiven by the free grace of God, and thus we attain eternal life. The sum of human duty is comprised in love of God and one's neighbor. Christ died to redeem us from sin. There will be a resurrection from the dead, and Christ will come again to judge all men, after which the wicked will be cast into eternal fire, and the righteous will be taken to enjoy eternal happiness in the presence of God. Every statement or even important word is supported by a scripture citation. There is no evidence that the publication of this Confession had the result of softening persecution of the Unitarians, as had doubtless been hoped, for the aim of the government was in every way possible to weaken and ultimately to exterminate the Unitarian Church. But it gives clear witness of the modest progress which in the first quarter of the eighteenth century the Unitarian Church had made in the reconstruction of Christian doctrine.

Not contented with the churches and other plunder they had already taken, the Catholics two years later asserted a new claim, and demanded the Unitarian school, the dormitory, and two professor's houses near by. There was nothing to do but yield as graciously as possible, and after a few weeks granted them to make arrangements, teachers and scholars held their final worship and bade the building a tearful farewell.²⁰ In another month quarters were found for the school in a side street, and while most of the students had scattered a new term was opened with an enrollment of ten; though they were advised to avoid any publicity which might stir up their enemies, and therefore not to wear the customary student gowns when they attended public worship, but to go in the dress of ordinary citizens. In other towns similar persecutions and repressions went on steadily. Under Charles in 1735 Unitarians were excluded from holding public office, and thus were denied political equality with other citizens. Upon this not a few who hitherto had heroically withstood oppression began now to weaken and fall away, seeing that otherwise they must be shut out of all public honors and all opportunity of civil service to their native land. Their chronicler, after relating their manifold persecutions, went on to account for their greatly diminished numbers by enumerating 38 distinct reasons tending in one way or another to hasten the ruin of the Unitarian

²⁰ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, II, 1130 f.

Church. Yet in spite of all, their Superintendent was able to reply to an inquiry from the Emperor toward the end of the eighteenth century that there were still 30,000 that confessed the Unitarian faith,²¹ and he fills nine large closely-written pages with an account of the various means of annoying or oppressing Unitarians that blind bigotry was able to invent.

Midway of the reign of King Charles, persecution and repression of Unitarians began to be more systematic and intense. When a post at court or an honorable administrative office fell vacant, if it had been held by a Unitarian another Unitarian was not appointed to fill the vacancy; nor could one obtain any fresh appointment, even though nominated and urged by persons of the highest character. The Unitarians, standing on their rights as citizens having complete equality with others, filed protests and petitions with the King, but they were ignored. From this time on no Unitarian received office in the chancellery of Transylvania.²² The Catholics then tried to strike a more mortal blow, and at the Diet in 1728 endeavored to deprive Unitarians of their lawful freedom of worship, and their ministers of the right to administer baptism, matrimony, or the burial of the dead. But the other two received religions, seeing that such a measure might soon be undertaken also against them, remembered their traditional bond of union, and offered effective resistance to the plan. The Catholics then attempted to secure repeal of the Union of the three nations, and of the Leopoldine Diploma and related decrees; to have the gifts and contributions of King John annulled, and to declare the three non-Catholic religions declared to be no longer 'received,' but merely tolerated, and to have the freedom of their worship depend on the arbitrary authority of the Prince.²³ The other two religions then realized that the Unitarians were the outworks of their common defence, which they must not allow to be weakened, and that all must stand together. The Unitarians then prepared an elaborate petition, deploring that they were overlooked by the throne, and appealing to the long series of acts and traditions on which they founded their claims, and in three later petitions detailed their grievances illegally inflicted, but all was to no purpose. They were not permitted even to present their petitions at court.

²¹ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 1022-1025, 1039-1047.

²² Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 1149-1155.

²³ Cf. Uzoni, *Historia*, ii, 1157-1163.

At the very height of this steady storm of persecution, their Superintendent Almási died in 1724, his death doubtless hastened by the sufferings of his church. Its active life was well-nigh paralyzed. Its leading members were cut off from the participation in public life which they so much valued, and the whole body could only withdraw to their own circles and homes, live as inconspicuously as possible, and of course abstain from all efforts to promote their cause. But after ten years of coma the 50,000 that had remained stubbornly loyal to their faith were roused into new life by the energy and wisdom of a remarkable new Superintendent. Michael Lombard Szentábrahádi was born in a Szekler village in 1683. His father and grandfather had been ministers. After winning honors in school he entered the ministry, but after a year he was sent abroad to finish his education. Returning to Transylvania he became professor in the Unitarian college at Kolozsvár at an exciting time, for within a month Steinville had seized the church, and later the Unitarians were also deprived of their school. Szentábrahádi secured a new location for it, and in 1720 became its Rector, a little later Pastor, and then chief Notary of the Church, and in 1737 Superintendent. He greatly extended and improved the Unitarian schools, and laid the foundation of the Church's permanent endowment funds; and in all his duties as teacher, preacher, pastor and administrator he was diligent and everywhere liked to such an extent that his contemporaries deservedly named him 'the eye, heart and tongue of the Unitarians.' In each field of his activity he secured permanent improvement; and he may fairly be called the second founder of the Unitarian Church, since while he found it nearly ready to succumb to fate, he left it at his death in 1758, though reduced in number to less than 50,000, yet effectively organized and provided with a system of excellent schools, as a foundation for its future growth.²⁴

Szentábrahádi left behind him the manuscripts of several important works which embodied the substance of his teaching, though none was allowed publication while he lived; but his college lectures on Unitarian theology, after having been long used by classes in manuscript as a text-book, were approved by the censor nearly thirty years after his death, and were at length published and widely circulated.²⁵ They

²⁴ Cf. Elek Jakab, 'Szentábrahádi Mihály' (with portrait), *Keresztény Magvető*, i (1861), 158-185.

²⁵ *Summa universae theologiae Christianae secundum Unitarios* (Claudiopoli, 1787). The author's name nowhere appears, hence it was sometimes attributed to George

form a handsome volume of over 600 pages, consisting of four parts: Of God, Of Christ, Of Christian Ethics, of the Church of Christ. The work draws its teachings solely from Scripture as a book of divine authority, and cites it extensively as witness to them. It is quite conservative in character, and retains various incidental teachings that were later outgrown; and it avoids controversial topics and speculative doctrines as not necessary to salvation. Thus it does not even mention the doctrine of the Trinity. It teaches the simple humanity of Jesus, but sanctions adoration and invocation of him as one subordinate to God. Its main stress, however, is laid on the practical conduct of the Christian's life. It is far more cautious in statement than the Racovian Catechism, totally differs from it in form of approach and method of treatment, and shows little dependence upon it. It thus marks no advance in Unitarian theology since Enyedi's work, and makes little original contribution to doctrinal development, being content to give a faithful reflection of scripture teaching, with an occasional answer to objections offered to its interpretations. On this level it served several generations as a simple guide to their religious faith, and must have had appreciable effect in molding the Christian character of the Transylvanian Unitarians. It was well calculated to lessen the enmity of the other churches, and it attracted fresh attention throughout western Europe to the Unitarians, and won from broad-minded scholars the admission that their religion was by no means so diabolical as it had long been painted.

King Charles died in 1740, and was succeeded by his daughter, Maria Theresia, in accordance with the famous Pragmatic Sanction which provided that if he left no male heir the right of succession should pass to the female line. Her long reign of forty years distinguished her in history as one of the greatest monarchs in the history of the Empire, able, wise, and conscientiously devoted to the welfare of her people. But though her rule was propitious for Hungary politically, it was filled with persecution for the Protestants, especially in Transylvania, and above all for the Unitarians.²⁶ Upon her accession she took the

Márkos, Professor of Theology at Kolozsvár, who prepared it for publication. Hungarian trans., *A Keresztény hitudomány összege az Unitáriusok szerint* (Kolozsvár), 1899. Cf. W. C. L. Ziegler, 'Kurze Darstellung des eigenthümlichen Lehrbegriffs,' etc., *Neues Magazin für Religionsphilosophie*, IV (1800), 201-276.

²⁶ Cf. Sándor Bodóczy, 'Maria Theresia egyházpolitikája és annak következménye az Unitárius egyházban' (M. T.'s ecclesiastical policy and its results on the Unitarian Church), *Keresztény Magvető*, XLII (1908), 20-30, 84-93.

usual oath, and specifically assured the Transylvanians that she would respect and maintain all their ancient rights, privileges and immunities.²⁷ Nevertheless, when the delegates from the four received religions in Transylvania went to offer the customary obeisance and pledge their loyalty to the new Queen, she refused to admit the Unitarian delegate to audience.²⁸

The key to the policy which the Queen consistently pursued with regard to her Unitarian subjects throughout her long reign is found in a carefully drawn plan for the systematic suppression of Unitarianism, which was submitted in 1744 by her religious advisers,²⁹ and after discussion was adopted, and with her approval was left to the government of Transylvania to carry out.³⁰ The measures applied increased in severity as time went on, and the Unitarian Church grew weaker under the attacks made upon it, and throughout her long reign there is little Unitarian history to relate except a continuous story of the oppressions that she laid upon the Unitarians, so that their lot under her was even harder than it had been under her father. The beginning was made with individuals. Early in her reign, when two Unitarian Deputies to the Diet were chosen, she ordered their constituents to substitute Catholics. She allowed Unitarian magistrates to remain in office only at Torda and one other place, and excluded them from the Torda Council. At Kolozsvár when any office held by a Unitarian fell vacant it was ordered filled by a Catholic or a Calvinist, while on various specious pretexts Unitarians were kept out of public office. Such acts did not, it is true, infringe their constitutional right to enjoy freedom of public worship, which she had promised to maintain unimpaired; but they were arbitrary acts of oppression or repression designed to weaken and discourage the Unitarian Church. It was in the activities of individual churches that her oppressions were most keenly felt. Thus Unitarian ministers might not go beyond the boundaries of their own parishes to visit their sick or to perform pastoral offices. They were bound to proclaim and observe the Catholic festivals. They might not hold the public debates on religious questions which they had so often

²⁷ Cf. Bod, *Historia*, iii, 303.

²⁸ Cf. Bod, *loc. cit.*

²⁹ In her treatment of Protestants she is said to have followed the counsel of her Jesuit confessor, Ignaz Kampmüller.

³⁰ Cf. Elek Jakab, 'Az Unitáriusok üldöztetése a Jezuiták által' (The persecution of the Unitarians by the Jesuits), *Keresztény Magvető*, xviii (1883), 388-399.

used to make their faith known. They might not make converts from other churches, nor might a member of another church marry a Unitarian. They might not build a new church nor repair an old one without royal permission. In the whole forty years of her reign only two Unitarian books were allowed to be printed, and the religious instruction of their children was forbidden.

The Queen interested herself especially in the conversion of the Unitarian boys and girls to the Catholic faith. To this end children were sometimes taken from their homes by force and placed in Catholic schools. A large fund was raised for converting Unitarian children at Kolozsvár, and in 1754 the Unitarian schools there were closed, and the Unitarians were forbidden to attend any but Catholic schools. For their university studies Transylvanian students had for several generations been accustomed to go to Switzerland, Germany or Holland, where generous funds had been established for their maintenance. The Queen now wished to encourage them instead to go to the Catholic University in Vienna, and she therefore refused to allow them passports for going further, so that in her time only three students were able to go to Protestant universities.³¹ When a promising Unitarian youth went up to Vienna, the Queen made him her godson, and gave him rich gifts for becoming a Catholic. For a time she tried the peaceable method of appealing to self-interest in winning converts, and by the subtle bribery of promises of favors or offices she was able to induce wealthy nobles to change their religion. This policy continued until few of the middle or higher nobility remained loyal to their faith, so that the Unitarian Church became predominantly one of the middle and humble classes; and in the last five years of her reign in the seven Szekler counties where Unitarians had been most numerous there were over 1,400 Catholic converts.³²

When milder measures failed, force was resorted to. In three parishes where church buildings had fallen into disrepair, and the members ventured to repair them without having first obtained permission, lawsuits were brought against them and a penalty of 1,000 florins had to be paid before worship in them might be resumed. In communities where relations were especially strained between Unitarians and Catholics, popular commotions would break out spontaneously, or be pur-

³¹ Cf. Bod, *Historia*, iii, 339 f; Bodóczy, *Maria Theresia*, p. 92 f.

³² Cf. Bodóczy, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

posely stirred up, and these would be made an excuse for proceedings against the Unitarians for breach of the peace, and for seizing their churches in punishment. In villages where the proportion of the inhabitants was anywhere near equal between the two confessions, Catholics would colonize the village until they could show a majority, which under an old law enacted under Gabriel Bethlen might then claim the church building. Thus the Unitarians lost many posts. Seizures became more frequent and violence more severe as the oppressors grew bolder and the oppressed grew weaker. At Szökefalva in 1744 the Governor had the church seized by armed Wallacks, and its endowment confiscated. At Szent Rontás, where ten years before the Unitarians had shown a good spirit by assisting in building a fine Catholic church in a neighboring parish, the Catholics in 1752 made an attack on the Unitarians while they were attending their morning worship, seized the church, cemetery and schoolhouse, and drove the minister and teacher from town. A month later the Unitarians in their turn resorted to force, and recovered their property. The government then intervened and suspended use of the church until the case should be investigated. It lay in court for twelve years, and judgment then was given in favor of the Catholics. In celebration of the victory the name of the village was now changed to Szent Háromság (Holy Trinity).³³ At Láborfalva and Sepsi-Szent Ivány churches were finally lost in 1762 after a struggle that had continued for nearly thirty years. The case of the church at Bágyon and that at Körispatak have already been spoken of. At Homoród Karácsonfalva in 1777, the Jesuits excited the mob to attack the Unitarian church. The Unitarians resisted and broke up the procession, whereupon the government prosecuted them, arrested and flogged the Unitarian minister, teacher and others, and ordered them to build a handsome Catholic church. At Brassó the Jesuits attacked the church while the members were celebrating the Lord's Supper, drove out the minister and spilt the elements; and later on the church was taken from the Unitarians. At Nyárad-Szent Márton the Catholics were deterred from making an attack only because the other churches had formed a league for mutual defence.³⁴ These are only a few conspicuous examples out of a large number of instances of persistent and systematic oppression through which a con-

³³ Cf. Bod, *Historia*, iii, 332.

³⁴ Cf. Bodóczy, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-91.

fession that in the sixteenth century had counted 425 churches and thirteen higher schools and colleges was at the end of two centuries of steady persecution reduced to fewer than 125 churches and a single school and college.

It must not be supposed that the Unitarians endured all these things in a spirit of meekness. On the contrary they often offered physical resistance with the greatest courage, and sometimes with success. They also repeatedly appealed to decrees of toleration, to the Diploma of Leopold, and to the repeated promises of monarchs to preserve for them equal rights and privileges with the other confessions, though their complaints and appeals brought no relief. The result of these continued oppressions upon the churches was, however, not all evil. If they gradually sifted out and detached from the membership the greater number of persons of rank and wealth, and all who from either fear or self-interest set other things above fidelity to faith and conscience, they left the remainder the stronger and more devoted to their cause. The persecutions that lessened their numbers only developed their inner strength. Their remaining noble families were generous, and their humbler members showed a constancy that became a proverb. With a spirit not crushed they held together and sacrificed the more determinedly, like a tried and united band of heroes. Only in the later years of Maria Theresia's rule did she begin a little to relax, encouraged thereto by her son, Joseph II, who was co-regent with her from 1765. Eventually she was brought to see how much damage was done to her rule by her subservience to Jesuit schemes, and in 1773 she reluctantly expelled them from her dominions. From this point on the persecution of Unitarians lessened, and with the accession of Joseph II in 1780, whose sympathies were all with religious toleration, a brighter day began to dawn for them, and they began slowly to regain strength and confidence, and to rebuild their church on the foundations so soundly laid by Szentábrahádi.

CHAPTER IX

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER

THE SYSTEMATIC REPRESSION and persecution of Protestants, especially of the Unitarians, as a policy of government reached its culmination under Maria Theresia; but in the latter part of her long reign she began somewhat to relax, and to rely more on persuasion than on force, and under her son and successor, Joseph II, a brighter day began to dawn. She appointed him co-regent with her in 1765 after the death of the Emperor Francis I; but she still kept all the power in her own hands, though he had some influence on her policy, as was shown in the expulsion of the Jesuits. He was trained for his future duties by government officials; but at court he saw so much of the crafty methods of the Jesuits in politics that he became decidedly set against not only them but all the religious orders. Meanwhile he journeyed much among the people, learned their needs and listened to their complaints, and promised to do what he could toward satisfying their wishes.

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century Europe was beginning to be stirred by the ferment of liberal ideas that were soon to find open expression in the French Revolution, and in the field of religion a spirit of generous toleration, the result of the German Enlightenment, was widespread among all the *confessions* in Austria. Having this background Joseph decidedly opposed the principles and practices hitherto current, and became a pronounced liberal, being much influenced by the writings of Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists, of whom he saw much in 1777 when on a visit to Paris where his sister was the Queen Marie Antoinette. He cherished the ideal of ruling over a great unified monarchy with a single official language, aiming only to promote the happiness of all the people without distinction of nation, rank or faith. Joseph gave promise of being perhaps the most enlightened ruler of his time, and on his accession in 1780 he proceeded at once to introduce

the reforms he had long had in mind; and in order to achieve his end the more immediately he undertook to rule as an absolute autocrat rather than through the Diet, taking it for granted that his people would willingly accept reforms in their interest, without delaying them by discussion and debate. Thus he greatly lightened the burdens of the peasantry, made sweeping changes in the system of education, made Church subordinate to State, sequestered church properties, disbanded the monastic orders, and above all sought to restore full freedom of conscience to the Protestants. Despite his sympathy with them he had hitherto been able to accomplish nothing in their interest. Thus in 1773 when the Unitarians sent a deputation to him at a Diet at Hermannstadt to complain of their grievances, though he promised to submit their complaints to the Queen she was obdurate and would not even let them be presented. As soon, however, as he had ascended the throne he began to introduce measures of religious toleration.

Outstanding among these was his famous Edict of Toleration, which though it had the support of a few leading statesmen and ecclesiastics, was stoutly opposed by nearly all the clergy, both regular and secular. This Edict, issued October 25, 1781,¹ provided in eighteen articles that Protestants might hold private worship anywhere, and public worship in places where a hundred or more families could provide an inconspicuous place of worship, parsonage and school. They might continue the use of their old churches, and restore those that had fallen into decay. They might own estates, engage in trade anywhere, enjoy full rights of citizenship, and hold public office. Their ministers were to be free from the authority of the Catholic Bishops, and various old oppressions were abolished. Abusive or insulting language on either side was forbidden. In short, most of the ancient rights and privileges of Protestants were restored and guaranteed.

In 1785 Stephen Agh, the Unitarian Superintendent² was authorized to publish the *Summa* of Szentábrahám, whom he had succeeded in 1758, and ere long the censorship of religious books was abolished. The further seizure of churches was forbidden; an indemnity of 5,000 florins

¹ For the text, cf. Johannes Borbis, *Evangelisch*, pp. 119-121, and Gustav Frank, *Der Toleranz* — Patent Kaiser Josephs II (Wien, 1882), pp. 37-41. A similar edict for Transylvania was issued a few weeks later. Cf. August Ludwig von Schlözer, *Staatsanzeiger* (Göttingen, 1782), I, 150.

² Cf. Elek Jakab, 'Agh István, Unitarius puspok,' etc. (Stephen Agh, Unitarian Bishop), *Keresztény Magveto*, xvii (1882), p. 65 ff.

was ordered paid for the loss of the great church at Kolozsvár, and sundry repressive measures were abolished.

But excellent as his various reforms were in themselves, Joseph, impatient of the delay involved in having them duly enacted by the Diet after free discussion, proclaimed them outright as arbitrary edicts, thus forcing them upon his people without having first won their approval. Wide discontent therefore arose, and after ten years he was forced to admit that his efforts as a reforming ruler had failed. He withdrew nearly all his decrees, and died in 1790 a disillusioned and disappointed man. The Edict of Toleration, however, despite strong clerical opposition, must have been better received, for it was left in force. His other projects of reform, too, though they had been too advanced for his time, or too rashly put forth, were nevertheless most of them enacted as laws by the Diet under his successor.

The reign of Joseph II marks a turning point in the history of the Unitarian Church in Transylvania. In 1789 it had touched its lowest point, with a reported membership of only 32,000, but from now on it began to take courage and recover strength. At the depth of this dark period the spirit of the members was revived by a new Superintendent, Stephen Lázár (1786-1811), who greatly aided their recovery by his personal benevolence and his influence with the nobles; and at a time when their discouragement and need were greatest the Church was further inspired by a splendid bequest from one of its members. Ladislas Suki (Zsuki) who died in 1792, was the last surviving scion of a very old and noble family possessing vast estates. He had never married, and having studied at the Unitarian College at Kolozsvár under Szent ábrahám and Agh, he was in his lifetime a generous supporter of church causes, and at his death he bequeathed to the Church almost his entire property, amounting in all to nearly 80,000 florins.³ As a result of this gift it was possible to increase the salaries of the Superintendent and the professors, to relieve poor ministers, their widows and students, and to establish a permanent church endowment. Other endowment funds were added, and in 1796 the Unitarians of Kolozsvár, who had long been obliged to worship in a common dwelling-house, erected a handsome new church which is still in use; and in 1806 a new school building which served for nearly a century, besides a residence for the Superintendent, and dwellings for the professors in the school.

³ Cf. Lajos Nagy, 'Suki László élete és alapítványa' (Ladislas Suki's life and endowment), *Keresztény Magvető*, III (1867), 125-132.

Leopold II, who succeeded his brother Joseph in 1790, was a wise and enlightened ruler, who sympathetically continued his brother's liberal policy, though he abandoned Joseph's autocratic method, and in his government sought the cooperation of the Diet. Thus despite clerical opposition he secured the passage of laws embodying the main points in the reforming edicts of Joseph, and by constitutional methods he strengthened the Protestant position and confirmed the Protestants in their freedom and rights, declaring his determination that the toleration previously established by decree should remain unimpaired.⁴ He was held in high esteem by his subjects, but his rule lasted only two years, when he died and was succeeded by his son, Francis I.

Francis I (1792-1835) was disposed to continue the liberal policy of his uncle and his father, but he was young and inexperienced, and his rule fell at a time when Europe was seething with political revolution, and the bloody excesses of the Reign of Terror in France, and the rise of radical conspiracies at home, bred a violent reaction against all measures of reform, so that he ended by being politically a reactionary conservative. In his policy of religious reform, however, he did not waver. Responding to an urgent appeal made to Leopold in 1791 by the Unitarians of Transylvania,⁵ he restored to them a fair share of the public offices, including some of the highest rank; whence he became gratefully known as 'Restorer of the rights of Unitarians.' From now on for half a century the country was so deeply absorbed in the spreading struggle for wider political freedom that religious questions were largely left as they were. In this reign the Unitarian Church experienced the longest period of peace and quiet in its entire history, in which weakened churches slowly regained strength, and many new places of worship were built. But while their external history during this period offers little of particular interest to record, there was an occurrence that had a stimulating effect upon their inner life. It was the thrilling discovery that there was elsewhere in Europe a healthy and growing body of churches, hitherto practically unheard of, but holding a faith essentially the same as their own, and even bearing the same name.

There may indeed have been in England a vague recollection that there had long ago been a church of Unitarians in Transylvania. The

⁴ Cf. *Articuli Diaetales Anni MDCCXCI* (Claudiopoli, 1793), arts. 53, 55, 56, pp. 109-111.

⁵ Cf. *A nemes Erdélyi Fejedelemség*, etc. (The noble principality of Transylvania), Koloⁿvár, 1791.

English traveler Paul Best had in 1624 brought home a report of such churches in both Poland and Transylvania. It is true that as early as 1660-68 Daniel Márkos Szentiváni (later Superintendent of the Transylvanian churches) was in England, where he met kindred spirits, and also came across a copy of Servetus's *Christianismi Restitutio*, and recognizing its great interest secured it and took it home (first leaving it on the way to be copied by several Socinian friends in Germany), whence it eventually passed into the possession of the Imperial Library in Vienna.⁶ Milton's *Arcopagitica* also refers to students at Cambridge in his time (and it is likely enough that some of them were Unitarians), coming from far Transylvania. But after the Socinians were banished from Poland, and the scattered groups of them had become dispersed and had melted away over Europe, communication with them had ceased, and the Unitarians in Transylvania had come to feel in their isolation that they alone among Christian men remained to cherish faith in the pure unity of God. For there was in any case as yet no organized Unitarian movement in England for them to hear of, and the great distance separating the two countries in an age before railroads, and the barriers of language, effectually kept them strangers to each other. Thus it remained for a full century of silence until, with the rise of fresh vigor among the liberal Dissenters of England, interest in the case of Transylvania was awakened. Meantime Joshua Toulmin in his *Memoirs of Socinus* (1777), and Theophilus Lindsey, organizer of the first Unitarian church in England, in his *Historical View of the Unitarian Doctrine* (1783), had given some account of the Unitarians in the time of Dávid, though this was only as a leaf of history from a now remote past, with no allusion to a living present. It did, however, furnish a background for the revival to come in the next generation.

Toward the end of the century a timid attempt to form contact with the English Unitarians was made from the Transylvanian side. The Hungarian Unitarian, János Kormoczy (later Superintendent at Kolozsvár), who was a student at Gottingen from 1794 on, learned from an English student there about the Unitarian chapel opened in Essex Street, London, by Lindsey, and sought to open correspondence

⁶ Cf. Wallace, *Antitrinitarianism*, I, 454-458.

⁷ For other brief notices in this period, cf. Henry Maty's *New Review* (London), vii (1663), 477; Robinson, *Researches* 1792, p. 627 ff.; Robert Adam, *Religious World Displayed* (Edinburgh, 1809), II, 150, briefly reviewed in *Monthly Repository* xii (1812) 82 f.; Thomas Rees, *Racovian Catechism* (London, 1818), p. xli ff.

with him. The letter apparently miscarried, for no answer was received.⁸ But the most important contemporary item bringing direct knowledge was published in 1820 in a letter from John Kenrick, an English Unitarian studying at Göttingen. This letter⁹ (doubtless derived from a Transylvanian fellow-student well acquainted with the subject) gave a lucid and comprehensive view of the history, teachings and organization of the Transylvanian churches. Its publication was timely, for it fell at just the time when the liberal dissenting churches in England, largely Presbyterian in origin, having long suffered galling denial of certain civil rights for refusing to subscribe the Articles of the established Church, were drawing together in defence of their rights, and for missionary propaganda of their views. These were therefore now much impressed at getting authentic and clear information about a movement like their own already long since organized and long and bitterly persecuted in Transylvania. It is altogether likely that from this letter of Kenrick's arose the impulse toward the circular letter now to be mentioned. The *Unitarian Fund for Promoting Unitarianism* had been founded in London in 1806, and was infusing fresh life and vigor into the scattered Unitarians in Great Britain; and with the purpose of discovering sympathizers in other lands, its Secretary, the Rev. W. J. Fox, prepared a letter describing the Unitarian churches in England, and inviting correspondence with any persons or societies interested.¹⁰ The latter gave an account of the Unitarians, their vindication of the use of reason in religion, their belief about God, Christ, and other distinctive doctrines, their form of worship, the development of their faith in the Anglican Church and among the Dissenters, their eventual organization as a separate sect, and their present state and extent. This letter was sent far and wide, not only in Europe, but as far as America and India. In about four months a copy reached the Unitarians in Transylvania, and Lázár Nagy, a member of the Unitarian Consistory, was appointed to send an interim reply until a fuller and more formal one could be prepared.¹¹

⁸ Cf. *Inquirer* (London), Jan. 26, 1935, p. 4.

⁹ Published in *Monthly Repository*, xv (1820), 193-199, and reprinted in Wallace, *Antitrin.*, iii, 594-599.

¹⁰ *Unitariorum in Anglia fidei, historiae, et status praesentis brevis expositio* (London, April 30, 1821), 13 pp., 8°. Signed by two Unitarian ministers. W. J. Fox and R. Aspland.

¹¹ The letter was in Latin, dated Kolozsvár, August 31, 1821, and addressed to Fox

It was between two and three years before the brethren at Kolozsvár finally got around to send their formal reply. It was written by Professor George Sylvester of Kolozsvár, and gave a corresponding account of the history, persecutions and present state of the Unitarian Church in Transylvania.¹² This exchange of letters aroused much interest in England, and called forth corresponding encouragement among the members of the hard-pressed church in Transylvania, whom it assured of having strong allies in a great nation of the West. The British and Foreign Unitarian Association, consolidating several societies previously existing in support of the same interest, was organized in 1825, and in its second report expressed the hope for a regular interchange of letters and exchange of students. Communication between the two churches has been maintained ever since, and has grown more frequent with the opening of new channels. An occasional traveler also spanned the intervening space in person; and in 1831 Alexander Farkas, one of the most prominent Hungarian laymen, even crossed the Atlantic, visited the Unitarian churches in Boston, and returning home published the first book of travels in America by any Hungarian traveler, with an account of the churches there.¹³ He made the acquaintance of the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, the Rev. Henry Ware, Jr., who opened correspondence with the brethren at Kolozsvár; and the widely traveled American Unitarian, Mr. George Sumner, visited Kolozsvár some years later.¹⁴ Firm and close connections with the English-speaking churches, however, were not finally achieved until after the middle of the century, when routes of travel were much better established.

In the untroubled period of the first half of the nineteenth century,

and Aspland. It gave a brief account of the organization, condition and history of the church in Transylvania, reported 120 congregations and 40,000 members, and requested further correspondence. Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xvii (1822), 437 f; translation in *Christian Reformer* (London), viii (1822), 253; Dionysius Lorinczy, 'The Hungarian Unitarian Church,' *Transactions of Unitarian Historical Society* (London), iii (1923), 20-39.

¹² Published in the *Unitarian Fund Register*, no. vi, pp. 51-56, bound in at the end of the *Monthly Repository*, xx (1825).

¹³ *Utazás észak Amerikában* (Travels in North America), Kolozsvár, 1824. See also his letter to Fox, giving an 'Account of the Unitarians of Transylvania,' and reporting a membership of 47,000; published in *Monthly Repository*, N. S. v (1831), 648-651.

¹⁴ Said to have been younger brother of the statesman Charles Sumner. Cf. Charles Lowe, 'The Unitarians of Hungary,' *Monthly Journal of the American Unitarian Association* (Boston), ix (1868), 423-426.

the churches made a steady growth in membership, and a rapid increase in the number of congregations, passing the mark of 100 churches, and approaching a membership of 50,000. They were much stimulated in 1827 by the receipt of a splendid bequest. The benefactor was Paul Augusztinovics of the royal law court in Vienna. He was a descendant of Polish exiles who came to Transylvania in 1660, and was son of a Unitarian minister. He was born in 1763, and graduated with distinction from the college at Kolozsvár. The Consistory aided his widowed mother from the Suki fund, and assisted him in getting started in his profession of the law in Vienna, where he was soon promoted. He held office there for thirty years, was honored and trusted by two Emperors, and became judge in the Royal Hungarian Supreme Court. He also received highest honors in the church, of which he became Chief Curator. Upon his death in 1837 he made the Unitarian Church his residuary legatee, bequeathed his landed estate to the Consistory for educational uses, and left his library to the college at Kolozsvár. His total bequest was larger than all the rest of the church funds put together.¹⁵

The long and happy period of inner quiet and healthy growth among the churches was quite overshadowed toward the middle of the century by the political disturbances of the Hungarian Revolution. The Hungarian people had long been dissatisfied with the union between their country and Austria, under which Hungary had been treated more and more as practically only a subordinate province. In 1848, therefore, when the flame of revolution had burst out in Paris, and fire was smoldering all over Europe, Hungary determined to cast off the yoke of German domination with all its oppressive features, revolted, and declared its independence. In a Hungarian Diet at Pozsony (Pressburg) in that year the Estates, under the leadership of Kossuth, adopted a new and liberal national Constitution, asserting equal and perfect religious liberty to all religions, and recognizing the Unitarian religion as legal throughout the whole kingdom instead of merely in Transylvania as hitherto.¹⁶ After a year of heroic but uncertain conflict the revolution was crushed. The Emperor realizing that the success of the revolution might be but the preface to the downfall of absolutist government

¹⁵ Cf. Áron Buzogány, 'Augusztinovics Pál életrajza tekintettel a lengyel Unitáriusok történetére' (The life of P. A. in its relation to the history of the Polish Unitarians), *Keresztény Magvető*, iv (1864), 11-36. Portrait.

¹⁶ Cf. Ferencz, *Spiegel*, p. 122 f, the 20th article.

throughout Europe, appealed to the Czar for aid, and Russian troops intervened. The rising was put down with great cruelty; while the Wallack (Romanian) peasantry took advantage of the situation to avenge themselves by rising against Hungarian masters who had heartlessly oppressed them for many generations, and created a bloody reign of terror, slaughtering Hungarian men, women and children of every sort and age wherever found, and exterminating whole villages. It was upon the remote villages of the Szeklerland, whence all the men had gone to fight for national freedom, that these barbarous outrages fell most heavily, to the great cost of the Unitarians who had been most numerous there.¹⁷

When the revolution had been smothered, Austria determined to prevent any recurrence of it by putting an end once for all to the national aspirations of the Hungarian people; and realizing that the heart and soul of these lay in the Protestant churches, she determined to use every means to extirpate Protestantism. The administration of the affairs of the country was therefore turned over to General von Haynau (known as 'the Hyena of Brescia') as military dictator. He had already won a reputation in Italy for savage cruelty, and at once entered upon a policy of ruthless terrorism. The leaders of the revolution were executed, a hundred others were sentenced to death, prisons were crowded, and many estates were confiscated. In the religious field he made himself the willing tool of the Jesuits, abolished the rights of Protestants, forbade their meetings, dismissed their officials and placed all their church affairs under Catholic overseers with strict military control.¹⁸ But his rule was so extreme that general protests were made, and in the next year he was recalled. Short as his administration was, it bore heavily on all the Protestant bodies, Unitarians included, yet at the same time strengthened their heroic spirit and drove them closer together in support of their common cause. The political struggle continued long, though its methods were made more humane; but in 1861 the Hungarian Constitution of 1848 was restored, and in 1867 under the Compromise (*Ausgleich*), by which points in dispute between Austria

¹⁷ For a picture of this period in the form of historical fiction, see Maurus Jókai, *Egy az Isten* (God is One); translated into German with the title, *Die nur einmal leben*, and into English (abridged) as *Manasseh*. Cf. John Fretwell, *The Christian in Hungarian Romance* (Boston, 1901). The hero of the story is a Toroczkó pacifist Unitarian.

¹⁸ For an account of his scheme, cf. Charles Loring Brace, *Hungary in 1851* (New York, 1852), pp. 208-217.

and Hungary were solved, a Dual Monarchy was constituted, in which the two, as absolutely independent sovereign states, having a single monarch, had each a parliament and ministry of its own.

In the meantime, while the struggle between Austria and Hungary was still unsettled, the Austrian government's efforts to weaken the Protestants continued, and were especially directed upon the Unitarians, who were recognized as outstanding among those holding out for Hungarian independence. Having made little progress by the use of violence, the more subtle means of persuasion were attempted. It was thought that Alexander Székely, Unitarian Superintendent during the turbulent period of the revolution (1845-52), might perhaps be won over, as some of the higher nobility had been, by the lure of high honors and material rewards. In place of his pitiful salary of \$260 a year, he was tempted by wealth, honors and high office if he would embrace the Catholic faith. He proved deaf to all such considerations, and remained faithful as long as he lived. The government refused, however, to sanction the election of a successor, and it was nine years before the Unitarians, after repeated protests, were allowed to elect one in 1861, now with the honorable title of Bishop.¹⁹

One more crafty scheme was now tried, by which it was proposed to dry up the Protestant confessions at their source, while apparently conferring a benefit upon them. After the Reformation the Protestants had continued the Catholic tradition of conducting the education of the young under the auspices of the Church. The larger or stronger parishes therefore would have not only a church and its minister, but also a parish school and its teacher, who was usually a young minister or a candidate for the ministry; while in the small or weak parishes the minister must serve as teacher of the children as well. Above these were higher schools in large towns, and gymnasiums or colleges for advanced students. Doubtless, due to lack of resources, not a few of these schools

¹⁹ Cf. Ferencz, *Spiegel*, p. 25. When the Protestant confessions reorganized their institutions after the Reformation, they gave the administrative head the title of Superintendent. For a long time they preferred this title as tending to break the chain of ideas associated with the title of Bishop. But as time went on, in the period of Catholic supremacy, the title of Superintendent came by contrast to betoken an inferior dignity; and under the new order of things the title of Bishop (which had all along been more or less employed unofficially) was authorized as official, and taken as signifying an ecclesiastical rank equal to the other, thus indicating that the four received religions were recognized as of equal rank. Cf. Elek Jakab, 'Az unitárius püspöki jogosultsága' (The right to the title of Unitarian Bishop). *Keresztény Magvető*, xxviii (1893), 199-205.

were of indifferent grade, and hence furnished some excuse for the demand now to be made. At all events, the Austrian government in 1856, as a part of its policy to germanize Hungary, determined to remodel the schools and colleges of Transylvania on the pattern of those of Austria, and with the same standard of teaching and support. To bring the Transylvanian schools up to the Austrian level, it was now demanded that there be a large increase in the number of teachers employed, and a considerable augmentation of the salaries paid. If this demand were not complied with within a certain limited time, the schools concerned must either be closed, or else forfeit their right under the State of granting degrees or certificates, without which one might not practice one of the learned professions or hold public office. It was realized by the Unitarians, and was believed to be intended by the government, that the requirements were set so high that the little Unitarian Church, sadly impoverished by recent economic conditions, could not possibly meet them. In this case the government then graciously offered to furnish the necessary support, on condition, however, of taking over the entire control of the schools.²⁰

The Unitarians were struck dumb by the alternative offered them, for they realized that if they yielded, control of their schools would fall to the Catholics, the religious instruction under which their youth were brought up would be Catholic, and within a generation or two their own religion would be virtually extinct. The total Unitarian population of Transylvania was less than 50,000,²¹ and the great majority of these were poor mountaineer farmers of the Szekler land; while the additional sum now demanded amounted to over \$70,000. Staggering as the sum was, the churches heroically undertook to do what seemed humanly impossible. With incredible sacrifice in subscriptions and assessments, supplemented by mortgaging their very homes, they were still unable to meet the sum required. As a last resort they then appealed for help from their brethren in England and America. Fortunately for them, there was resident among them an English Unitarian of prominent

²⁰ Cf. *Christian Reformer*, N. S. xiii (1857), 301-304, 374-378, *Quarterly Journal of American Unitarian Association* (Boston), iv (1857), p. 486 f; v (1858), 234-241; *Inquirer* (London), xvii (1858), 815 f.

²¹ In the matter of statistics the Transylvanian churches continued the Catholic custom of numbering not merely the confirmed adult membership, but the whole population of the church families, of whatever age. Thus, when taken by western standards, the membership would be much smaller than the statistics indicate.

family²² whose intercession with the English Unitarians was sought. Two of the professors at Kolozsvár, therefore, in the name of the Consistory, requested him to forward to the brethren in England and America a full statement of their crisis and the urgency of their needs.²³ This was done through the agency of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association in London, which in turn forwarded the appeal to America. The Executive Committee of the American Unitarian Association prepared an appeal to be presented to all the churches, and a day was set for taking up a concerted collection, which would undoubtedly have been generous. But a little more than a week before the day appointed, the country was suddenly smitten (October 13, 1857) by the worst financial panic the country has ever known, the fruit of a mad orgy of wild speculation, which swept over the whole land like a hurricane and left would-be givers prostrate, so that nothing could be done. The English churches, however, were able to raise in the end some £1,230, which was sent by the Secretary of the Association, the Rev. Edward Tagart, who in company with his daughter went to Kolozsvár in August, 1858, to take the money in person, being the first English Unitarians to visit their distant brethren.²⁴

This visit brought great encouragement to the Transylvanian churches,²⁵ and although the full demands were not met, yet payment was accepted and the schools were saved. This period of the revolution and of the subsequent persecution of all Protestants was in some respects a benefit to the Unitarians, for it not only roused and deepened their

²² John Paget (1808-'92), born near Loughborough in Leicestershire, educated at the Unitarian Manchester College at York, studied medicine, and traveled widely in south-eastern Europe. His *Hungary and Transylvania* (2 vols., London, 1839) did much to make those countries better known. He married a Hungarian baroness and settled in Transylvania, where he promoted scientific agriculture. He endowed an English chair at the Unitarian College at Kolozsvár in memory of his son. Cf. János Kovács, 'Paget János, Esq. életirata' (Life of J. P., Esq.), *Keresztény Magvető*, xxviii (1893), 96-103. Portrait.

²³ A foundation for intelligent interest in their cause had been laid in 1846 when Stephen Kovács contributed an informing article (much the best, hitherto), annotated by Paget, an 'Antitrinitarianism in Transylvania,' to J. R. Beard's *Unitarianism Exhibited* (London, 1846), pp. 296-315.

²⁴ Cf. M. Lucy Tagart, *The Hungarian and Transylvanian Unitarians* (London, 1903). v. also the article by Mr. Paget in *Christian Reformer*, N. S., xiv (1858), 746-752, and *Inquirer*, xvii (1858), 762 f.

²⁵ Which however was unfortunately clouded by the fact that Mr. Tagart was taken seriously ill on his return journey, and died at Brussels on October 12. This broken mission was supplemented in 1859 by a visit from the Rev. S. A. Steinthal of Manchester, sent out by the Association. Cf. his published account *infra*.

devotion to their own cause, but forced all the confessions to ignore their mutual differences and jealousies as they worked together for their nation, thus attaching greater importance to their common heritage as Hungarians than to their diverging religious views. The happy result was that from this time on the four received religions largely gave up their ancient animosities and began to live together in amity. From 1861, when the Hungarian Constitution was again put in force, and 1867 when Transylvania was united to Hungary, until the outbreak of the first World War the churches enjoyed another half-century of healthy growth, in which their numbers grew from 50,000 to 75,000, and the churches with their dependent congregations increased from 106 to 163, and their total funds rose to some five million crowns.²⁶ Another unlooked for benefit came from the attack upon their school system. As a result of interest in the Transylvania churches thus aroused in England, arrangements were made to bring promising students, who had hitherto been going to German Universities for advanced study, to study under Unitarian auspices in England. Hence since 1860 Hungarian students have come to the Unitarian colleges at London or Oxford, and more recently at Manchester, for a period of two or three years each. These returning home have become professors in the college at Kolozsvár, or ministers in the larger churches, and thus have exerted great influence in raising the standard of scholarship, and in keeping religious thought abreast of the advancing standard of the time.²⁷ In 1892 a similar arrangement was made in the interest of selected young women to have a year or more at school in London.

As years went on, relations with the English and the American Unitarians grew closer, and fraternal interests were deepened by many visitors, singly or in considerable companies, who came to assist at various ceremonial occasions. Thus in 1868, to celebrate the three hundredth anniversary of the proclamation of religious freedom at Torda, in 1879, to honor the memory of Francis Dávid on the three hundredth anniversary of his death; in 1891, on the occasion of opening a new church at Budapest; in 1901, for the opening of the new college building at Kolozsvár; and in 1910 to commemorate the four hundredth anni-

²⁶ Cf. Joseph Ferencz, *Short Account of the Unitarian Church of Hungary* (Budapest, 1907), pp. 27, 34 ff.

²⁷ After the beginning of the twentieth century an occasional student from Transylvania reported for graduate study at one of the American schools.

versary of Dávid's birth.²⁸ In this period of peace the churches increased, as has been said, in numbers, membership and strength, and also began to take root again in Hungary, where the first modern church was planted in 1879, to be followed by one at the capital with a fine church building erected in 1891, and others at later dates. A good many of the elementary parish schools were given over to the government to conduct, now that its spirit had grown more liberal; but the higher schools were kept and strengthened. Two professorships in the college at Kolozsvár were endowed by American friends, and Channing's principal works were translated and published in Hungarian (6 vols., 1870-81.²⁹

With the beginning of the twentieth century the Hungarian Unitarian Church as it is now officially called,³⁰ now confirmed in the enjoyment of all its ancient rights and privileges, possessing entire freedom in religion and full equality with the other confessions, with its members eligible to public honors and offices, with a steadily growing constituency of over 75,000, and a roll of over 160 congregations,³¹ with 42 excellent intermediate parish schools, three well-staffed academies, and one prosperous college with a theological school attached, with increasing endowment funds, and state subsidies to churches and schools, and with firm bonds of sympathy formed with England and America, and friendly relations with the other confessions, apparently had every ground for looking forward to long generations of happy existence. All such hopes were doomed to be frustrated by the overwhelming catastrophe of World War I. It was for some time uncertain which side of

²⁸ Published accounts of these visits give a more vivid contemporary sense of the life of the Unitarian churches during this period than any purely historical narrative could do. Cf. S. A. Steinthal, 'Account of a Visit to Transylvania,' *Christian Reformer*, N. S. xv (1859), 477-489, 530-538; also *Inquirer*, June 25, 1859; J. J. Tayler, 'Narrative of a Visit,' etc., *Theological Review* (London), vi (1869), 2-48, also separately; Alexander Gordon, *Tercentennial Commemoration of Francis Dávid* (London, 1879); Chalmers, *Recollections*, Henry Ierson, *Report of a Visit to Hungary* (London, 1891); Tagart, *op. cit.* See also articles by American visitors in *Unitarian Review* (Boston), ii (1874), 357; xvii (1882), 38; xxiii (1885), 134; xxiv (1885), 33, 117; *Monthly Journal*, x (1869), 83, 396.

²⁹ When the Transylvanian University was established at Kolozsvár in 1872 both the Rector and the Pro-rector chosen were Unitarians formerly connected with the Unitarian College there.

³⁰ Cf. Lőrinczy, *op. cit.*

³¹ Including 54 *filialae*, that is, 'mission congregations,' unable as yet to support a minister of their own, but with worship regularly conducted by a neighboring minister.

the struggle Romania would espouse, but she at length chose to take that of the Allies, with the private understanding, as it was believed, that in case of victory she should be rewarded with the rule of Transylvania. The treaty of Trianon in 1920 therefore sealed Transylvania's fate, and even before the treaty had been signed Romanian troops invaded their new territory and swarmed over all parts of it, wasting, burning, robbing, ravaging and killing without restraint, after the manner of half-savage and wholly undisciplined troops, still lusting for vengeance for the wrongs and oppressions that they felt they had suffered from the Hungarians for generations without redress. They repeated the bloody scenes of the time of the revolution at the middle of the past century.

It is not to our purpose to recount this period here, except in so far as concerned the Unitarians. Suffice it to say that fury was vented upon all Hungarians without distinction, upon Unitarians neither more nor less than on the others; though none actually suffered so severely from this first invasion as did the Unitarians of the Szeklerland, who lay nearest Romania, whose isolated farms were easily overrun, and who were quickly left ruined, penniless and starving. The first year or so of the occupation were a time of utmost chaos, with freebooting soldiers out of control and little heeding either law or humanity, with the new government inexperienced and unfitted for its responsibilities, and with new officials the embodiment of the greed and venality to which they had been accustomed during centuries of Turkish misrule. Until the new government was reduced to some sort of order, there were countless cases in which Hungarians were arrested, imprisoned, beaten and variously maltreated for no other reason than that they were Hungarians, who must now be made to realize their new estate as a conquered people.

As reports of these atrocities, inflicted upon minority races in defiance of the treaty, reached other countries, a storm of foreign protest was aroused to which some attention had to be paid. The Bishops of the minority churches appealed to their brethren throughout the world. Several commissions of Unitarians and others in America and England went to Transylvania and made investigations in 1919, 1920, 1922 and 1927,⁸² and reported what they found, with the result that some im-

⁸² Cf. 'The situation in Transylvania, and an appeal for help,' *Christian Register* (Boston), Jan. 15, 1920; Louis C. Cornish, *Transylvania in 1922* (Boston, 1923); *id.*,

provement of conditions was slowly made. Eventually the more flagrant abuses were done away, and an endurable *modus vivendi* was reached; though an unappeased bitterness of feeling continued on both sides, and many annoyances or more serious acts of violence kept occurring that were both too frequent and too petty to arouse serious protest. Thus the situation continued until the outbreak of World War II.

By far the most serious and permanent blow, however, that fell upon the churches was connected with the administration of a new scheme of agrarian reform, under which the larger landed estates were to be expropriated by the government, divided up, and sold to the landless peasantry. This scheme, admirable in itself, was supposed to be applied impartially, with no respect to nation or religion, and to both private estates and church lands. But in practice, when dealing with Unitarians, the officials, doubtless thinking it fair to despoil their late enemies, damnable heretics that they were, often expropriated so large a portion of their estates as not to leave the owners enough even for bare subsistence, and then paid for what was taken, not only in greatly depreciated currency, but in sums so ridiculously small as to amount to little better than outright confiscation. Also in dealing with the churches, whose endowments were almost entirely in the shape of landed property, they would strip the church of practically its sole means of support. The new government was as yet too poorly organized to oversee these proceedings, even had it been so disposed, or to punish these wrongs when complained of and proved. Again the churches, in the extremity of their distress, appealed for help to their brethren abroad. Sympathy was at once aroused, and response was prompt and generous. Collections were taken for immediate relief, missions were sent to distribute food and clothing to the destitute; practically all the churches were visited; most of the Transylvanian churches were adopted as 'sister churches' by congregations abroad, which assumed especial interest in them and responsibility for them, and for several years sent them an annual donation of \$100 or more each, until the worst of their crisis was past, and they had become in a measure ad-

The Religious Minorities in Transylvania (Boston, 1925); John M. Cabot, *The Racial Conflict in Transylvania* (Boston, 1926); Roumania *Ten Years After* (Boston, 1928). Also for *ex parte* treatments (to be read with critical caution), Henrietta M. Tichner, *Roumania and her Religious Minorities* (London, 1925); Zsombor de Szász, *The Minorities in Roumanian Transylvania* (London, 1927); Sylvius Dragomir, *The Ethnical Minorities in Transylvania* (Geneva, 1927).

justed to their new situation. Thus once more deprived of a large share of their property and reduced almost to beggary, but yet heroically struggling and loyally adhering to their faith, the churches were slowly recovering tone and looking forward to a brighter future, when a new and greater war engulfed the world. It has not been a part of the plan of this work to bring it down to the very date of publication by recording events of history still in the making; but now that so much has been told it would seem needlessly abrupt to break the thread so closely connecting the events of World War II with those of World War I since both involved our group of churches so deeply. Indeed it seemed for a time as though the new war were going to redress some of the injuries of the Unitarian churches and bring them relief and renewal of strength. In 1940 the attempt was made by the conquering powers to reduce causes of friction between the two adjoining nations by revising the boundaries between Hungary and Romania. In this way considerable territory formerly belonging to Hungary was restored to her by Romania, and not a few Unitarian churches that had for over twenty years been oppressed under Romanian rule to their great joy again became Hungarian; though 53 still remained subject to Romania. Church life revived among the Hungarian churches, several new churches were built, and old schools were enlarged. The Agricultural School at Székely-Keresztur was much extended, a new domestic training college was founded at Kolozsvár, and much new publishing was done. But on the other hand the churches still remaining under the Romanian dominion were greatly weakened, and some congregations quite ceased to exist. Their fraternal relations with England and America brought the Unitarian churches under suspicion with the German administration, and led to persecution, under which one village (Vadad) in central Transylvania was completely wiped out, and other buildings were sadly damaged. Several of the ministers were imprisoned or placed in concentration camps, church incomes in landed property were reduced to almost nothing, and the three churches in Budapest were practically destroyed. Much heroism was shown under the German occupation; and especial record deserves to be made of the memorable work of the Rev. Alexander Szent-Iványi in Hungary. He had been minister of the church at Kolozsvár, where he had been active in defence of the religious minorities, and was therefore forced by the Romanian authorities to leave the country. Going to Budapest he there became active

in educational and religious work among the distracted residents, in securing aid for the Polish refugees, in furthering the interests of American and English residents in Budapest, in securing humane treatment for prisoners of war, and in establishing hospital care. For more than two years he was in constant danger of arrest while he continued to work through the underground.³³ When peace came he was appointed Deputy-Bishop of the Unitarian churches in Hungary, and was highly honored by government. The memory of what this leader did in times of utmost stress, and at constant risk of his life, will long be cherished as an inspiration to his countrymen and the members of his church. What the future lot of these brave churches shall be history must determine in its own way; but it can not be doubted that the devoted spirit that has survived through so many generations of persecution will continue to sustain the faithful, even though they be destined still for a time to 'live under the harrow.'

The history of Unitarianism in Transylvania would hardly be complete without at least a summary account of its constitution, characteristics and customs. The Unitarian Church in Transylvania is predominantly a church of the plain people. The magnates or wealthy landholders, though still influential in the other confessions, were before the end of the eighteenth century largely lost, either by persistent oppression or else by their yielding to the temptation offered by civil offices and public honors open only to conformists. In the social scale they are commoners, and the great majority of them are farmers, owning and working their own fields; although a select proportion who have attained university education enter the professions, and take up residence in the larger towns. Most of the churches therefore are rural churches, and their members are with few exceptions poor people. Nevertheless, they have been said to be the most liberal of all the confessions in the support of their own institutions, and they have paid especial attention to their schools. Formerly each congregation maintained its own elementary school, and the larger ones also had intermediate schools; but more recently these have been absorbed into the state educational system. The religious instruction of the young, however, has throughout been attended to by the church, and given either by the minister or by a separate teacher. Out of a number once much

³³ A summary account of his manifold services is to be found in Denis Valentine Szantó, *With God against Hitler* (Budapest, 1946).

larger, two high schools or academies still survive, at Székely Keresztúr and Kolozsvár, with excellent buildings and equipment, and with several hundred students each; while above these is a college at Kolozsvár, with a theological department giving a four-year course of study, and a further year of field service. These schools have always maintained a high reputation, and have therefore often been resorted to by scholars from other confessions. A limited amount of state support is received.

The Unitarian people have for generations, even by the admission of rival confessions, been highly esteemed for their excellent characters. In the period when the government was on the alert for every charge that might be made ground for action against them, the candid Catholic Bishop, Demetrius Náprágy, reporting to the Emperor Rudolf at the beginning of the seventeenth century in a letter now celebrated, after taking great pains to say that the Unitarians were thrifty, industrious, moral, well behaved, added that these very qualities, and the increasing prosperity that they brought, made their detestable doctrines a scandal and a danger for the surrounding population. He thought, therefore, that he ought to report these Unitarians to the government as a permanent hot-bed, not of rude disorders, but of terrible liberalism.³⁴ In like spirit a Lutheran historian of Hungary, writing early in the nineteenth century, bore witness that 'their simple worship, the strict morality of their communities, the dignity, piety and learning of their Superintendents, have gained them great consideration in the country'.³⁵

The organization of the Unitarian Church³⁶ is a modification of that of the Reformed Church, of which it was originally an offshoot. The unit is the congregation, composed of all adult males or contributors to the church expenses, and to one or other of the congregations each Unitarian is bound to belong. The congregation is administered through its Annual Meeting. It chooses its own minister, and also the school teacher.

³⁴ Cited by Athanasie Coquerel, Fils. *Une Visite aux Chrétiens Unitaires de Transylvanie*, *Revue Politique et Littéraire* (Paris), 2^e série, III (1873), 426. Cf. also Elék Jakab, 'Egyháztörténelmi Adatok' (Contributions to Church History), *Keresztény Magvető* XVIII (1883), 388 ff., id., *Unitáriusok*, 388-399.

³⁵ Ignaz Aurelius Fessler, *Die Geschichte der Ungarn und ihrer Landsassen* (Leipzig, 1815).

³⁶ Cf. Révész, Kovács and Ravasz, *Hungarian Protestantism* (Budapest, 1927), pp. 123-127; Ferencz, *Account*, pp. 12-16; György Toth, *Az Unitárius Egyház Szervezete* (The organization of the Unitarian Church), 3 vols. (Cluj Kolozsvár, 1922); Stephen Borbely, *Article on the Constitution of the Hungarian Unitarian Church*, in *Christian Seedsower* (Birmingham), no. 1, 1922.

and other necessary officers. The congregations are grouped in eight districts, each of which is governed by an *Esperes* (District Superintendent) and two Curators, who are chosen by a General Council representing the several congregations. District assemblies are held each year or oftener, and decide questions concerning the welfare of the congregations, and they are visited each year by the *Esperes* and his Secretary.

The supreme authority in the Church is the Chief or Supreme Consistory. It is composed of the Bishop, two lay Chief Curators, and certain other members serving by virtue of their offices in the districts, or on committees, or as Professors; and besides these, 129 elected members both lay and clergy, and a number of representatives chosen by the districts or the larger congregations. The Supreme Consistory makes the laws and rules concerning the churches and schools, and in general manages all the important affairs of the Church. It meets annually at Kolozsvár, except that every fourth year it meets elsewhere in the character of a Synod, at which ministers are ordained and Bishops and Chief Curators are elected. There is also a Representative Consistory of about forty members, which is in effect a sort of executive committee, sitting at Kolozsvár and meeting monthly, which administers the current affairs as they arise, supervises the work of churches and schools, and deals with the civil government. The Bishop, general officers and ministers all receive what in other lands would be considered very small salaries, and have to live with the utmost frugality; but the ministers also receive some payments partly in kind, and with their own hands they cultivate a small tract of land assigned to them, thus winning much of their staple provisions.

The beliefs of the churches are comprised in the Catechism by Joseph Ferencz, first issued 1864, and frequently revised (ed. 14, 1928).³⁷ The most conspicuous central doctrine is that of the unqualified oneness of God, whose will is made known to us in the Scriptures, and whose character is perfectly illustrated in Christ as a perfect human being, but not a divinity. The Holy Spirit is only another expression for the power of God working in all men. The Scriptures are held in great reverence as a source of truth and a guide to men, though they are accepted not blindly but under the guidance of reason and conscience.

³⁷ Any confessions or statements of belief presented at Deés in 1636 or before or after are long since disregarded as antiquated.

The doctrinal tendency of the Church as a whole may be said to incline to conservatism; but the younger ministers, especially those that have studied abroad, are well abreast of modern views. The preaching is predominantly practical rather than doctrinal, and the Constitution of the Church requires that ministers must refrain from giving offence in their sermons or making attacks on others' religion, but must teach their own peaceably, and avoid proselyting. Their places of worship are dignified, but plain and unadorned; and the order of service is simple, consisting of prayer, Scripture, hymns and sermon. On Sunday, which is reverently observed, there are both morning and afternoon services; and on weekdays, especially in rural districts, there are brief morning prayers in church before the members go to their work, and prayers again at eventide when they return from their fields. It is said that there are churches where this practice has been continued for three hundred and eighty years without interruption. The young upon reaching the age of fourteen years are carefully instructed in the Catechism, and are then publicly confirmed. Baptism is observed as a formal recognition of acceptance of the Christian religion, and as a sign of entrance into the Christian Church. The Lord's Supper is sacredly held on four Sundays in the year as a holy commemoration of the death of Jesus, from which members absent themselves only for the gravest reasons, and with great regret.

At this point, the question again suggests itself, how far the movement that we are tracing succeeded in Transylvania in realizing the principles that we consider characteristic of the movement as a whole, the principles of complete freedom, reason and tolerance in religion. Toward attaining full religious freedom, great and rapid progress was made at the very start. The authority of the orthodox creeds was early rejected decisively and without regret. In place of these, Scripture was without question taken for granted as final authority in questions of faith and morals; and that this was in any way to be doubted no one even imagined. Such a thought in fact could hardly occur to any one until two centuries later, after modern biblical criticism began to regard the Scriptures in a new light. Nor was the principle of the supremacy reason in religion yet emphasized, for of course Scripture, being assumed as of divine authority, must by its very nature be entirely reasonable, even though its statements had for the present to be devoutly accepted on faith. But it was in its advocacy and its practice of the prin-

ciple of perfect toleration in religion that Unitarianism in Transylvania first and most strikingly distinguished itself. Dávid eloquently pleaded for this principle before the Diet, and his followers embodied it in legislation; and at a time when the power of the government might in the interest of what was then the ruling confession have oppressed its rivals, it practiced equal toleration of all. Of no contribution to religious history have Transylvanians been more proud than of this. If despite all this we are reminded that Dávid was brought to his tragic end for his religious beliefs, and that his church was required to purchase its further existence by submitting to a definite confession, limiting its freedom of faith, it must also be recalled that Dávid was prosecuted not by his church but by the secular government; and that while the ministers after Dávid's fall were forced to accept a creed it was by an act of spiritual violence, but that as has often happened with enforced creed-subscription, the act was performed reluctantly and *pro forma*, and the confession was regarded as merely symbolical, and little further attention was paid to it, and that the further history of the church in Transylvania records no instance when, in a time of ever changing thought, there was a prosecution for departure from its articles. Thus the judgment of history on the history of Unitarianism in Transylvania may be pronounced that despite the long record of its suffering under persecution, and without regard to the points of doctrine in which it has departed from other churches, it furnishes a noteworthy example of a religion that, while unwaveringly true to its own conception of truth, has yet kept free of spiritual bondage, and has been generously tolerant of those whose doctrines it felt bound to reject.

CHAPTER X

PRECURSORS OF UNITARIANISM IN ENGLAND

THE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT whose history we are endeavoring to trace from its beginning early in the era of the Protestant Reformation down to the present time, affected to some little extent the religious life of every country in which the Reformation took root, though it became fully developed in thought and polity in only four countries, one after another, namely Poland, Transylvania, England and America. But in each of these it showed, along with certain individual characteristics, a general spirit, a common point of view, and a doctrinal pattern that tempt one to regard them as all outgrowths of a single movement which passed from one to another; for nothing could be more natural than to presume that these common features implied a common ancestry. Yet such is not the fact, for in each of these four lands the movement, instead of having originated elsewhere, and been translated only after attaining mature growth, appears to have sprung independently and directly from its own native roots, and to have been influenced by other and similar movements only after it had already developed an independent life and character of its own.

Thus the Socinian movement in Poland arose in the bosom of local Protestantism out of germs stirring in the minds of religious exiles from Catholic Italy, and owed nothing to any foreign movement, unless it were some subsidiary social features imbibed by a few of its early leaders from the Anabaptist Communists in Moravia. The Unitarian movement in Transylvania, again, though in its origin almost exactly contemporaneous with that in Poland, instead of being derived from the latter, grew directly out of the local Calvinist church, under the leadership of Francis Dávid, well before Socinianism in Poland had become firmly established; and it had a largely independent history for well-nigh forty years before it yielded much to the dominating influence of Socinianism. Likewise early Unitarianism in England was no outright importation of Socinianism from Poland or Holland,

though in this a fully developed system lay already to hand; for a full dozen or more of the precursors of the English movement had suffered martyrdom for some form of the Unitarian heresy in the ninety years before Socinianism had become well enough known to be recognized by the authorities as a public danger. Nor had John Biddle, 'the Father of the English Unitarians,' ever read any Socinian writer before he settled his judgment concerning the doctrine of the Trinity,¹ although his followers were later so much influenced by reading Socinian books that the orthodox long called their movement Socinianism. In fact, it seems not unlikely that each of these separate movements might have reached essentially much the same position that it eventually occupied, without any outside influences, but simply as the normal outgrowth of certain tendencies latent in Protestantism itself, and in certain types of mind in whatever national or religious environment.

The ultimate germs of English Unitarianism, then, are to be found far back of the first clear emergence of the movement in the second half of the seventeenth century, and are foreshadowed even before the Protestant Reformation. It is necessary here to do little more than mention briefly three early heretics who seemed to lean toward Unitarian views. Earliest of these was the rather questionable instance of Adam Duff O'Toole,² who is said to have denied the incarnation and the doctrine of the Trinity, and was burned alive at Dublin as heretic and blasphemer in 1327. Next comes the case of William Sawtre (Sautre),³ sometime priest at Lynn, who was convicted of heresy, publicly recanted, was condemned again and finally burned as a relapsed heretic at Smithfield, March 20, 1401, eight days before the passage of the fateful Act *De haeretico comburendo*, which condemned all convicted heretics to death at the stake and was not abolished until 1677. He was the first in England to suffer death for his religion. Third was Reginald Pecock (c. 1395-c. 1460), Bishop of St. Asaph and later of Chichester, called by Bonet-Maury 'the father of English Rationalism,' who in two published writings expressed the view that the authority of Scripture and reason was superior to that of ecclesiastical

¹ Cf. Joshua Toulmin, *Review of the Life . . . of the Rev. John Biddle* (London, 1789), p. 13.

² Cf. *Dictionary of National Biography*, s. v.

³ Cf. *D.N.B.*, s. v.; Thomas Crosby, *History of the English Baptists* (London, 1738), i, 20 f; Alexander Gordon, *Heresy* (London, 1913), pp. 16-18, 59 f; John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (London, 1870), iii, 221-234.

tradition, and hence was made to resign his office in 1458.⁴ These, however, can be considered but isolated instances, widely separated in time and space, not standing even as the beginnings of our movement, but merely as evidences of individuals reaching out for freedom of faith in place of blind obedience to traditional authority.

Leaving these early instances, we come nearer to the beginnings of an integrated movement when we reach John Wyclif, whose translation of the Bible⁵ into English late in the fourteenth century opened the Scriptures for the common layman to read and judge for himself. Using this freedom his Lollard followers inevitably tended to stray more or less beyond the close fold of traditional belief, and thus came to be charged with sundry heresies. Some of them are said to have been tinged with Antitrinitarianism; indeed, William Sawtre just mentioned was said to be a Lollard. It is however less because he was a pioneer of Unitarian views than because he burst the stifling bonds of the traditional doctrinal system, and encouraged a broader freedom of belief in general (itself one of the prime characteristics of the Unitarian movement), that Wyclif deserves to be included in this reckoning. For independent study of the Bible must be regarded as the most fundamental of all the influences that combined in shaping the Unitarian movement. The leaven continued thus to work and spread, despite manifold persecutions, for a century and a half until Henry VIII, in declaring England's independence of the Pope in 1534, established the English Reformation, and thus opened the door to many on the Continent who were suffering from religious persecution and looked to England as a haven of refuge; for by the new law, passed in 1534, a sentence passed against a heretic might not be executed without the King's warrant, the right to deal with heretics being thus taken from the Church and lodged with the civil authorities.⁶

In the following year 1535, therefore, during a bloody persecution of the Anabaptist followers of Jan van Geelen in their violent insurrection at Amsterdam, in the course of which van Geelen himself was killed,⁷ numerous companies of Anabaptists crossed over to England,

⁴ Cf. *D. N. B.*, s. v., Alexander Gordon, *Heads of English Unitarian History* (London, 1895), p. 14; Gaston Bonet-Maury, *Early Sources of English Unitarian Christianity* (London, 1884), pp. 27-29.

⁵ The so called 'Wyclif's Bible' was probably translated not by him but by his disciples.

⁶ Cf. Daniel Neal, *History of the Puritans* (London, 1822), I, 13 f.

⁷ Cf. Bonet-Maury, *op cit*, p. 44 f.

where they established themselves chiefly in the eastern counties and in Kent. They were welcomed as immigrants for their skill as useful artisans, and they were in the main orderly and peaceable citizens; but religiously they were under suspicion and were narrowly watched. In fact, in their religious views they were of two sorts; some were marked only by their objection to the custom of baptizing infants, which they believed to be without scripture warrant; others, being unrestrained by an authorized confession, and interpreting the Bible as seemed to them good, ran into a variety of vagaries that might easily breed religious dissension in the new Protestant kingdom, and even end in civil disorder. To avoid such a danger, therefore, several Bishops and others were commissioned to search these out and bring them into court. A number were found and abjured their errors, among which were denial of the Trinity and of the deity of Christ; in fact, at this period, Arian and Anabaptist were used indiscriminately as equivalent names.⁸ In the same year twenty-five Dutch men and women were examined in St Paul's for denying Christ's humanity; and of these fourteen were condemned and burned, two in Smithfield, the rest in other towns.⁹ These measures were ineffectual, and Arianism is reported at this time to have been professed openly in Essex and Kent;¹⁰ and of the twenty-six burned under Henry VIII it is fair to presume that a good number suffered for denying the Trinity.¹¹

With the accession of Edward VI in 1537 the prospects of carrying out a thorough reform of the Church became brighter. Henry VIII had never been more than half Protestant, and as he grew older he became lukewarm to the Reformation. But under Edward, a boy of but nine years, while the civil government was managed by the Privy Council, ecclesiastical matters were administered by Archbishop Cranmer, who was zealous for the Reformation and for strictness in doctrine. He began to root out those that were unsound in their views, and already in June 1548, John Assheton, priests of Shiltelington, was brought before him, accused of holding that the doctrine of the Trinity was first established by the Athanasian Creed; that the Holy Spirit is not God,

⁸ Cf. Gilbert Burnet, *Abidgment of the History of the Reformation* (London, 1728), II, 80 f.

⁹ Cf. Benjamin Evans, *The Early English Baptists* (London, 1662), I, 46. Other authorities give different figures.

¹⁰ Cf. John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (Oxford, 1822), II, I, 369.

¹¹ Cf. Robert Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography* (London, 1850), I, 5.

but only a certain power of the Father, and that Jesus Christ, though a holy prophet, was not the true and living God. All these things he admitted, but now for fear of the stake he renounced and abjured these 'errors, heresies and damnable opinions,' confessing the Trinity and the deity of Christ.¹² Assheton was the first one in England to be arraigned on the charge of Antitrinitarianism.

In order to strengthen the Reformation, and at the same time to build up the English Universities, Cranmer invited eminent scholars from Protestant centers on the Continent to come to England. One of these was Ochino, and for a short time Laelius Socinus who came in 1547/8, though neither was as yet antitrinitarian. Persons from various countries on the Continent, however, having been banished on account of their religion, came to England in increasing numbers, until there were said to be in London at least 3,000 Protestant refugees, mostly from the Low Countries, but also from France, Italy and Spain. As they had no place where they might meet for worship in their own language, the King in 1550 granted them in London the church of the Austin Friars, to use for religious worship after their own manner. This came to be known as the Strangers' (i.e., 'foreigners') Church, and it was placed under the oversight of a Superintendent of their own rather than that of an English Bishop, though subject to visitation by the Bishop of London.¹³ Their first Superintendent was the famous Polish Protestant John à Lasco (Jan Łaski). Being composed of various elements and governed as it was, this church, though in outward form orthodox, ere long became a center where various unorthodox views found expression, and thus it doubtless had some influence on the early development of English Unitarianism, though by no means so broad or deep as Bonet Maury contends.

Throughout the reign of Edward VI there was much alarm in church circles over the rapid spread of 'Arianism,' and Cranmer took every means to discover the sources of this and to stop them. Com-

¹² Cf. David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae* (London, 1737), iv, 40-42, John Strype, *Memorials of Thomas Cranmer* (Oxford, 1840), i, 255-257, *Monthly Repository of Theology* (London), vii (1812), 222.

¹³ Cf. Strype, *Memorials* II, i, 375-382, *id.*, *Cranmer* (Oxford, 1822), i, 335-346, John S. Burn, *History of the French Walloon, Dutch and other Protestant Refugees settled in England* (London, 1846), *passim*; Bonet Maury, *Sources*, pp. 60-66, 115-136. The King's Letters Patent in Burn, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-268, and in Bonet Maury, pp. 236-243. There were also churches of foreigners in a score or so of other centers.

plaint was made to the Council, and six Bishops and some others were appointed a commission to search for and examine any Anabaptists or other heretics and either reclaim them or else if obstinate deliver them to the secular arm. Several thus discovered abjured; but one that was conspicuous for views more or less Unitarian remained steadfast and suffered accordingly. This was Dr. George van Parris, a surgeon by profession and a Fleming by birth. He had come from Mainz to London, where he was a member of the Strangers' Church,¹⁴ a man of unblemished character, notable for his devout habits; but there had been of late considerable fear lest Unitarian views spread. He was therefore accused and tried before Cranmer where, as he knew no English, the examination had to be conducted through an interpreter. He was charged with believing that Christ is not very God, and that the only God is God the Father, which he refused to retract or abjure. Unmoved by threats he was excommunicated from the Strangers' Church, condemned for denial of the deity of Christ, and despite powerful intercessions in his behalf was burned at Smithfield, April 25, 1551.

The brief reign of Edward VI came to an end in 1553, and with the violent reaction introduced by Queen Mary the Church of the Strangers was broken up, and its members scattered over the Continent, not to return until 1560, when Queen Elizabeth allowed them their church again. Mary promised indeed to make no change in religion, but she soon broke her promise. She had Edward's laws about religion repealed, and the old penal laws against heretics were revived. Protestant leaders began to be burned, and preachers in large numbers were turned out of their pulpits. Over 800 that had been prominent in the Reformation fled the country and sought safety in Protestant centres in Germany or Switzerland, including 14 of the higher clergy, over 50 Doctors and eminent preachers, together with many of the nobility and hundreds of other prominent citizens. Though no Catholic had been put to death in Edward's time, Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer were now sent to the stake, and in all nearly 300 of the reformed were put to death in Mary's reign.¹⁵ Mary's persecutions fell not only on the

¹⁴ Cf. Burnet, *Abridgment*, II, 82, Wilkins, *Concilia*, IV, 44 f; Neal, *Puritans*, I, 50; *Monthly Repository*, VII (1812), 439-442, *Christian Reformer* (London), IV (1818), 329; Wallace, *Antitrinitarianism*, II, 124-127, Evans, *English Baptists*, I, 80, *D. N. B.*, s. v.

¹⁵ Cf. Neal, *Puritans*, I, 74-88, Strype, *Memorials*, III, II, 554-556; Crosby, *English Baptists*, I, 64.

leaders, but also on the humble and the poor. Though we know little of them but their names and their fate, some of these deserved honorable mention in this record. Thus one Patrick Packingham, a dealer in hides, was burned as an Arian at Uxbridge in 1555, a fate from which his recantation at the stake did not save him.¹⁸ In the next year William Powling, a sawyer of Thornham in Kent, denied the Trinity and the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit; John Simms of Brencley and Robert King of Petham confessed to similar heresies, though all three escaped their fate by a timely abjuring.¹ Others were imprisoned, as is witnessed by the case of a nameless confessor who was shamefully treated by a fellow prisoner of orthodox faith John Philpot, Archdeacon of Winchester, whom Mary had imprisoned for his Protestantism, while in prison had a theological discussion with an Arian, in which he became so wrought up that he must needs relieve his feelings by spitting on his opponent, for doing which he afterwards sought to justify himself by publishing the singular tract entitled, 'An Apology of John Philpot; written for spitting upon an Arian with an invective against Arians, the very natural children of Antichrist with an admonition to all that be faithful in Christ, to beware of them, and of other late sprung heresies, as of the most enemies of the gospel' (1559). What became of the Arian is not recorded; but Philpot himself was sent to the stake in 1555.

Apparently the same troublesome heresy followed the English refugees on the Continent and called for opposition there; for Dr Bartholomew Traheron (1510-58), who had been Dean of Chichester, and was one of the exile church at Frankfurt, where he taught in their seminary, lectured and published expressly against the Antitrinitarians.¹⁹ The Rev John Pullayne also published a 'Tract against the Arians,'²⁰ and was rewarded by being made Archdeacon of Colchester.

¹⁸ Cf. Evans, *English Baptists* 1, 102.

¹⁷ Cf. Wallace, *Antitritin* 1, 29 ff. 127-130, Strype, *Memorials* III, 1, 540-542.

¹⁸ Reprinted in part, with comments, in Theophilus Lindsey, *Historical View of the State of the Unitarian Doctrine* etc. (London, 1783), p. 92 ff., Strype, *Memorials* III 1, 434 f., 469, III, 11, 363-380, Wallace, *Antitritin*, 1, 23 ff., Joseph Henry Allen, *Historical Sketch of the Unitarian Movement* (New York, 1894), p. 19 f., John Philpot, *Examinations and Writings* (Parker Society), Cambridge, 1842, pp. 293-318.

¹⁹ Cf. Wallace, *Antitritin*, 1, 30 f., Strype, *Memorials*, III, 1, 543 f.; Bartholomew Traheron, *Exposition of Part of St John's Gospel . . . against the Arians* (London, 1858).

²⁰ Cf. Wallace, *loc. cit.*, Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (London, 1721), 1, 137, 148, also reprinted, *D. N. B.*, s. v.

With the death of Queen Mary and the accession of Elizabeth in 1558, the Church of England again became Protestant. The people had strongly reacted against the severity of Mary's rule, and that of Elizabeth was welcomed. Though she favored the Reformation, she proceeded with caution, seeking to establish a national Church that should as far as possible be acceptable to all parties. Its doctrine was to be a compromise between Calvin and Luther, and its worship and ceremonial a compromise between Catholic and Protestant. Thus the unity of the kingdom was to be saved from weakening quarrels about religion, while any that refused to cooperate in so generous and inclusive a policy were to be regarded not so much heretics in doctrine as traitors to the civil government. She therefore made as few changes in outward forms as were consistent with reformation in essentials, and the result therefore was not wholly satisfactory to the reforming party. The refugees now returned from the Continent, confirmed in their attachment to the Reformation, but already showing the beginnings of a cleavage between two wings. Those from the congregation at Frankfurt favored the conservative forms they had known under Edward VI; while those that had been under Calvin's influence at Geneva and desired a more radical reform provided the germ of the Puritan party soon to arise.

Elizabeth reestablished the Strangers' Church in 1559, though now under the direct oversight of the Bishop of London, and besides the Dutch congregation already existing separate ones were gathered for Protestant refugees from France, Italy and Spain.²¹ She also at once abolished the laws for the burning of heretics, though within a year she was persuaded to order an investigation as to whether any heresies were being spread; when so many were discovered that in 1560 all Anabaptists were ordered to leave England, since they refused to join in the worship of either the national Church or the Strangers' Church as Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity of the previous year required, but instead met secretly.²² Evidently persecutions of the Anabaptists followed, for in 1560 they petitioned the Bishop through Adriaen van Haemstede (Adrian Hamsted), one of the ministers of the Dutch

²¹ Cassiodoro de Reyna, said to have been an avowed Servetian, was minister of the Spanish congregation, 1558-63; but he afterwards fell into disgrace, fled the country, and eventually returned to the Catholic Church. Cf. Henri Tollin, 'Cassiodore de Reina' *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du Protestantisme Français* (Paris), xxxi (1882), 385-397; xxxii (1883), 241-250, 289-298.

²² Cf. Wallace, *Antitritin.*, i, 35.

church at Austin Friars, asking for toleration. Bishop Grindal regarded this as a request for toleration of heresy, and not only refused to grant it, but called van Haemstede before him, and when he refused to subscribe a recantation of the Anabaptist errors excommunicated him.²³ An eminent Italian member of the church, Jacobus Acontius (Jacopo or Giacomo Acontio, Aconzio, Concio),²⁴ who shared van Haemstede's views and openly defended him before the Bishop, was also excommunicated in the following year. Acontius was the author of several interesting writings on various subjects, but he is of particular interest to us here on account of his famous work, *Satanae Stratagemata* (Basel, 1565), which was in print for more than a century in the original Latin, or in French, Dutch and English translations.²⁵

This work, which Acontius returned from London to Basel in 1564 to see through the press, was dedicated to the Queen, and for more than a hundred years was eagerly read or bitterly denounced for its powerful argument in favor of religious toleration, in which he complemented the work of Castellio (*v. supra*, vol. 1, p. 205). As a convert from Catholicism he regarded the many sects and heated controversies among the reformed churches, to which Catholics pointed as the crown-

²³ Cf. John Strype, *History . . . of Edmund Grindal* (Oxford, 1831), pp. 61-69.

²⁴ Cf. Strype, *op. cit.*, p. 66. Acontius, born in the Trentino probably in 1492, after first studying for the priesthood, later chose the law. He next pursued military science, and spent several years in the service of the Duke of Pescara and at the court of the Spanish Viceroy at Milan. Having become Protestant he left Italy in 1557 and took refuge at Zurich with Ochino, was for a time at Basel where he associated with the group of Italian liberals, and then at Strassburg where he met English exiles, whom he later joined in England after their return thither. He became a member of the Strangers' Church, was granted citizenship in 1561, and was in such favor with the Queen that although the Bishop had excommunicated him in the same year he dedicated his most important religious work to her in 1565. Cf. Peter Bayle, *Dictionnaire, Historical and Critical*, ed. 2 (London, 1734-38), s. v; *Monthly Repository*, xvi (1821), 456-458; Bonet-Maury, *Sources*, chap. viii; Francesco Ambrosi, *Jacopo Aconzio* (Trieste, 1888), Walther Kohler, *Acontiana* (Heidelberg, 1932); Erich Hassinger, *Studien zu J. Acontius* (Berlin, 1934); D. N. B., s. v., Louis Anastase Guichard, *Histoire du Socinianisme* (Paris, 1723), pp. 261-264.

²⁵ Twenty-five editions in all are known, the latest and best being that edited by Walther Kohler (München, 1927). Gives full bibliography. Cf. Daniel Gerdes, *Scriptum Antiquarium* (Groningen, 1762), vii, 123-133; *id.*, *Historia Reformationis* (Groningen, 1749), iii, 147; *Observationes Selectae* (Halle, 1700-05), vi, 204-230; Lindsey, *Historical View*, pp. 73-84; Girolamo Tiraboschi, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana* (Modena, 1824), vii, 559, 700, 818; Edoardo Ruffini Avonda, 'Gli "Stratagemata Satanae" di Giacomo Aconzio,' *Rivista Storia Italiana* (Torino, 1928), xiv, 113-141, and that by G. Ràdetti (Firenze, 1945). English trans., *Satan's Stratagems* (San Francisco, 1940); Thomas Crenius, *Animadversiones philologicae et historicae* (Lugdunum Batavorum, 1695), ii, 30.

ing disgrace of Protestantism, as clever devices of Satan to divide and weaken Christ's kingdom and destroy men's souls. The way to outwit these wiles of the old fox was to ignore most of the points in dispute as non-essential. Let all the sects discard their confessions, and unite upon one containing only the few essentials of Christian belief, stated in language taken from Scripture alone. In the seventh book of his second edition he proposed a statement covering only six brief points, and beyond these he would require no one to accept any doctrine as necessary to salvation. This plea for a tolerance broad enough to unite all sects into a single church, holding doctrines that all Protestants own, found ready acceptance among broad-minded Christians. Thus, after its translation into Dutch in 1611, it rapidly spread among the Arminians in Holland, attracted some favorable notice even in Germany, was espoused by Latitudinarian leaders in the Church of England, and was employed by Milton in his *Areopagitica*.²⁶ On the other hand it was strongly objected to by the conservatives in all quarters; for it ignored as non-essential the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the Lord's Supper, and other hotly disputed doctrines, so that it was complained that even Arians or Socinians could subscribe such a confession. When at length in 1648 the Rev. John Goodwin translated the first four books into English, it was reported to the Assembly as defective in doctrine,²⁷ and led to the passage of the 'Draconic ordinance' against heresy. If, however, the essential feature of the movement whose history we are here tracing is assumed to be the form of doctrine known as Unitarian, then Acontius can not be regarded as one of its apostles. But if one of its most pronounced characteristics is acknowledged to be tolerance in religion, then Acontius deserves to be included in this record as one of its earliest and most influential heralds.

Despite the measures taken against them, the Anabaptists continued to increase, so that in 1575 the Act *De haeretico comburendo*, after slumbering seventeen years, was reluctantly revived and enforced against them. On Easter of that year a little congregation of them, while privately worshiping in a house in Aldersgate Street, London, was surprised, and some thirty of them were arrested and imprisoned. Some recanted, some were flogged and banished, one died in prison, and two others, the poor and aged Jan Pieters (or Jan the Wheelwright) and

²⁶ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xvi (1821), 456 ff.

²⁷ Cf. Wallace, *Antitrin.*, i, 108 f.

Hendrik Terwoort, a goldsmith, who were charged with a heretical view concerning the incarnation, were burned alive at Smithfield, and 'died in great horror, with crying and roaring,' as the historian relates.²⁸ John Foxe, the martyrologist, addressed to the Queen an eloquent appeal in their behalf, but in vain. She excused her action by saying that it would ill become her to set free those that had dishonored God, when she had lately punished some that had been traitors to the State.²⁹ The principal seat of Antitrinitarian views among the Anabaptists was in the county of Norfolk, where a number of victims were ferreted out by Bishop Scambler. Mention is also made of Matthew Hamont of Hethersett, a plowwright, who was burned in 1579 for denying that Christ was God; and of his followers John Lewes, and Peter Cole a tanner of Ipswich, who were burned in 1583 and 1587 respectively; and of the Rev. Francis Kett, a graduate of Cambridge, who for blasphemous opinions concerning Christ had his ears cut off, and was then burned near Norwich in 1589.³⁰ All these were charged in vague but generally extravagant terms with unsound views as to the Trinity or Christ; but they all give evidence of a wide-spread prevalence among humble, Bible-reading Christians of discontent with the traditional doctrines and a desire for a simpler and more scriptural form of doctrine.³¹

²⁸ Cf. Thomas Fuller, *Church History of Great Britain* (London, 1837), II, 508, quoted by Crosby, *English Baptists*, I, 69-74, John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation*, II, I, 564; Neal, *Puritans*, I, 273; Wallace, *op. cit.*, I, 35 f; Evans, *English Baptists*, I, 138-164; Edward B. Underhill, *Struggles and Triumph of Religious Liberty* (New York, 1851), pp. 179-190.

²⁹ Cf. Wallace, *op. cit.*, III, 554-556; Theophilus Lindsey, *Apology on Resigning the Vicarage of Catterick*, ed. 4 (Dublin, 1775), 226-239; Wilkins, *Concilia*, IV, 282; Gordon, *Heresy*, p. 24; Fuller, *op. cit.*, IV, 387 f; Crosby, *loc. cit.*; Fuller, *op. cit.*, IV, 387 ff; Neal, *Puritans*, *loc. cit.*

³⁰ Cf. a spectator's account by William Burton, in *David's Evidence* (1602), quoted in *Christian Moderator* (London), I, 37 (June 1, 1826), Wallace, *Antitrim*, I, 7-39, Fuller, *Church History*, III, 66 f; Strype, *Annals*, III, II, 73; *D. N. B.*, s. *iv.*

³¹ In addition to those spoken of above, perhaps brief mention should be made in passing of three others whose names occur in the record, information about whom is scanty, vague or disputed. So Christopher Vitells (or Viuet), the first Familist preacher in England, who saved his life by recanting (Gordon, *Heads*, p. 16). Also Christopher Marlowe (1564-93), the dramatist contemporary with Shakspeare, who is said to have denied God and his Son Christ, blasphemed the Trinity, and written against it, though the charge is denied as a Puritan libel (Wallace, *Antitrim*, I, 40-42; Wood, *Athenae*, I, 338; *Monthly Repository*, IX (1814), pp. 117, 302; Theophilus Cibber, *Lives of the Poets, etc.* (London, 1753), I, 85 f). So also Thomas Mannering, Anabaptist of Norfolk, who denied the deity of Christ, declaring that he was only a man, though endowed with

By the end of Elizabeth's reign the heresy fires had pretty well burned themselves out, to be revived under James I for a brief moment, after slumbering for over twenty years. James came to the throne in 1603, bred a strict Calvinist, thinking himself a competent judge of religious questions, and disposed to take quite seriously his title of Defender of the Faith. One of his first acts was to publish 'Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical,' by which he asserted supreme authority over all matters of the Church, and outlawed all meetings outside the Church of England assuming to be those of lawful churches, thus striking at the Anabaptists.³² Also at the Hampton Court Conference in his first year, where he listened to the desires of both parties, he made it clear that in the struggle between the Episcopalians, who wished to maintain the government and practices of the Church as they were, and the Presbyterians, who desired a more thorough reform and were beginning to be known as Puritans, his sympathies were all with the former. He also undertook to check the introduction of heresies from abroad. Thus in 1611 he ordered Vorst's *Treatise on God and His Attributes* to be burned at St. Paul's Cross and at both Universities; and in 1614 he caused to be burned the Latin edition of the *Racovian Catechism*, which the translator had dedicated to him.³³ It was well on in James's reign that the last instances of burning for heresy in England took place in 1612, in the cases of Legate and Wightman, who died in the same month, and are usually spoken of together, but in almost every other respect were quite separate. Bartholomew Legate³⁴ was a cloth merchant in the county of Essex, where he had business connections with Holland. He was a prominent Anabaptist, and his brother Thomas had already died in prison in 1608. He was of attractive personality, of blameless character, and well versed in the Scriptures. The King was

infinite power from God. Against him Alexander Gill published a *Treatise concerning the Trinity* in 1601. What became of him is not of record (Wallace *Antitritin*, 1, 39; Wood, *Athenae*, 1, 602. John Milson *Life of John Milton* (Cambridge, 1859), III, 157, 385, 389).

³² Cf. Wallace, *Antitritin*, 1, 42 f.

³³ Cf. *supra* vol. 1, pp. 541 f., 411.

³⁴ Cf. Fuller, *Church History* III, 252-255, John Locke, *Works* (London, 1824), IX, 188-197, Crosby, *English Baptists*, 1, 107. Lindsey, *Historical View*, pp. 289-294; *id.*, *Apology*, pp. 47-51, *id.*, *Considerations on Christian Idolatry* (London, 1792), p. 119 f., *Christian Reformer*, N. S., XI (1884), 100, 227 f., 343, Wallace, *Antitritin*, II, 530-534; Florence Gregg, *Bartholomew Legate the last of the Smithfield Martyrs* (London, 1886), historical fiction.

reluctant to proceed against him though he was under arrest as a heretic, and in private interviews he often sought to correct him. But when Legate yet remained unshaken, the King at length burst out in anger, 'spurned at him (kicked him) with his foot,' and banished him from his presence. He was long held in easy confinement and kindly treated, and was often called before the Bishops in the Consistory of St. Paul's for examination; but as he boldly persisted in defending his opinions and refused to repent, he was finally excommunicated by the Bishop and condemned on thirteen blasphemous counts as an obdurate, contumacious and incorrigible heretic, and was sentenced to death. Refusing all offers of mercy and pardon offered even at the stake, he was burned on March 18, 1612, in the presence of a great concourse of spectators.³⁵

Almost exactly contemporary with the case of Legate was that of Edward Wightman³⁶ of the parish of Burton-upon-Trent, who has the distinction of being the last to be burned for heresy in England. We know little more of him than what the documents of his trial relate; but he was evidently a man of disordered mind on matters of religion, for apart from denying the Trinity, the deity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, and the Creeds, he considered himself a divinely appointed prophet foretold in Scripture, and that he himself was the Holy Spirit. Examined before the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, he was charged with holding the heresies of ten ancient heretics and of the Anabaptists, and was convicted on sixteen separate heads. He lay in prison for several months and was often exhorted to repent, but refused, and was finally sentenced to die. At the stake, when scorched by the fire, he recanted and was pulled out of it; but after two or three weeks he took back his recantation, 'and died blaspheming.' One other was sentenced to death under James, a Spanish 'Arian' whose name has not been preserved; but he was permitted 'to linger out a miserable life in Newgate rather than to awaken too far the compassions of the people.'³⁷ Indeed, the King seems to have lost his faith in this method of discouraging heresy, seeing that heresy still survived nevertheless, and that the pub-

³⁵ See the warrant and narrative, quoted by Theophilus Lindsey, *Conversations on the Divine Government* (London, 1802), i, 119 f.

³⁶ Cf. Fuller, *Church History*, iii, 255; Neal *Puritans*, i, 259; Crosby, *English Baptists*, i, 108, Appendix i; Wallace, *Antiirrin.*, ii, 534-539, iii, 565-568; Lindsey, *Apology*, pp. 52-55; *Christian Reformer*, N. S. xi (1844), 99-103, 227 f., 343.

³⁷ Cf. Neal, *Puritans*, i, 260.

lic were led by such executions to be impressed by the constancy of the victims, and rather to sympathize with them than to abhor their opinions. He therefore 'politically preferred,' says the historian Fuller, 'that heretics hereafter, though condemned, should silently and privately waste themselves away in the prison rather than to grace them, and amuse others, with the solemnity of a public execution, which in popular judgments usurped the honor of a persecution.' As time went on, the King's zeal for orthodoxy and conformity in religion somewhat relaxed, and he contented himself with the burning of heretical books. When the Reformed Church in Holland convened the Synod of Dort in 1618 to deal with the rising Arminianism, he sent several representatives of the Church to do all in their power to repress the growing spirit of liberalism in Holland; and when before and after that date the orthodox majority in the Dutch church were opposing the appointment of Vorst to a chair at Leiden, he used all his influence with the Dutch government to prevent his being installed. Henceforth the engrossing problems of the Church in England were concerned less with the irruption of heresies from the outside than with the growing differences within the Church itself, first the bitter struggle between the Episcopal party and the Puritan party for control of the Church, which was to end in a permanent division between churchmen and Dissenters in separate organizations, and after that the slow approach toward greater freedom of belief in both the Church and organized Dissent.

After the burning of Wightman there were no more executions for heresy in England. The extreme Calvinism of James's theology became strangely transformed into the relatively liberal Arminianism of the Remonstrants. He had perhaps come to realize that heresy could not be successfully exterminated at the stake; while the Anabaptists doubtless learned the wisdom of being yet more secretive in their meetings. But chiefly interest was centering less on heretical tendencies outside the Church in a barely tolerated sect, and was becoming concerned rather with the question of the constitution of the Church itself: should it still be governed by the Episcopal element then in control, and remain in polity, doctrine and worship closely akin to the Roman Church, to which James seemed more and more inclined; or should the Puritan element, now steadily gaining in strength, prevail and enforce a complete reformation, leaving the Church Presbyterian in its organization, and purged of any trace of Catholicism in doctrine and

form of worship. This was to be the issue that was to divide both Church and State for the greater part of the seventeenth century, taking precedence over mere details of doctrine which had hitherto been so conspicuous. Such questions, however, were still discussed among members of both parties, though somewhat less publicly than before.

For well nigh a generation before and after the death of James, therefore, there was no overt Antitrinitarianism, though the leaven was quietly working beneath the surface. For by this time many Socinian works in Latin for scholars were coming from the Raków press and were being eagerly read in private by persons of inquiring mind, and English translations of important works of Socinus and others were being clandestinely printed by Collegiants or Remonstrants in Holland, and were circulating widely among the common people in England. At the same time an occasional Polish scholar or nobleman in his travels came in person and formed friendly acquaintance with English scholars, and discussed religious questions even with a Bishop, making a favorable impression by their high breeding and by their temperate and reasonable way of discussing controverted points.³⁸ An occasional student from Poland or Transylvania also appeared at one of the universities, and sought to arouse interest in his religion, or to make converts to it. Thus Adam Franck was discovered by Archbishop Laud in 1639, trying to make converts among the students at Cambridge and the Transylvanians whom Milton reports as studying there.³⁹ will doubtless have included some Unitarians. But though Socinian or Unitarian views were thus quietly spreading, no action was as yet taken against Socinianism save in the burning of the *Racovian Catechism* at James's instance in 1614.

Midway of this period there was at Oxford a little circle of thoughtful men who were to have no small influence upon religious thought and to be known as the founders of the latitudinarian movement in the Church of England. The three most important of these were Lucius Cary (the second Lord Falkland), 'the ever memorable John Hales of Eton,' as he was afterwards known, and William Chillingworth.⁴⁰ All

³⁸ Archbishop Tillotson thus spoke in warm appreciation of the Socinians and of their temperate manner in doctrinal controversy. Cf. his sermon on the Divinity of our blessed Saviour, *Works* (London, 1820), III, 310 f., quoted by Krasinski, *Reformation in Poland*, II, 407.

³⁹ *supra*, p. 148.

⁴⁰ Cf. John Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England* (Edinburgh 1872), I, 176-343.

three were devout churchmen and adherents of the Episcopal party, and quite out of sympathy with the Puritans, wishing the Church to be as broadly inclusive as possible, so that it might welcome Christians of all shades of opinion, and insisting on belief in only the smallest possible number of essential doctrines. They were true Broad-churchmen and apostles of tolerance. They had evidently imbibed the spirit of Acontius, whose *Stratagems* was reprinted at Oxford at just this time (1631), very possibly at their instance. Lord Falkland, born a Calvinist, had fallen under liberal teachers at Dublin University, and afterwards settling on his estate near Oxford became the centre of a brilliant literary circle; and at a time when religious liberty was being shamelessly violated under Archbishop Laud he earnestly devoted himself for some years to philosophical and theological studies, together with his close friends Hales and Chillingworth. Entering Parliament he took an active part in discussion of policies of Church and State, as head of the moderate or liberal party, opposing the claims of infallibility in any sphere, and pleading in his speeches for freedom of religious opinion, reason and tolerance. When the Civil War broke out Falkland sided, however, with the King, and fell in battle at Newbury in 1642. He had early been shown some writings of Socinus by his chaplain, Dr. Hugh Cressy of Oxford, who had been the first to bring Socinus's works to England, and was so greatly taken with them that he was judged to have been one of the first Socinians in England.⁴¹ By his career in Parliament, and by his writings on Episcopacy and Infallibility, he had an influence that long endured in favor of a moderate and liberal Church.

A more influential and more famous member of the same group was John Hales (1584-1656). In his student days at Oxford he showed brilliant talents, and after taking his degree was in due time made fellow, and then Professor of Greek. Having also taken orders in the Church he was presently made fellow of Eton College, where he lived the retired life of a scholar, interrupted only by his attendance at the Synod of Dort, as chaplain to the English Ambassador. Here the treatment of the Remonstrants by the orthodox seemed to him so outrageous that, though hitherto a Calvinist, he 'bid Calvin good night.'⁴² He

⁴¹ Cf. John Aubrey, *Brief Lives, chiefly of Contemporaries* (Oxford, 1898), i, 278; *D. N. B.*, s. v.; John James Tayler, *Retrospect of the Religious Life of England* (London, 1845), p. 306.

⁴² Cf. Farindon's letter prefixed to Hales's *Golden Remains* (London, 1688), p. 3.

wrote but little, but he detested tyranny in the Church, and opposed intolerance, discussing it eloquently in a *Tract concerning Schism and Schismatics* (1636), and in one *On Private Judgment in Religion*. These brought upon him the charge of Socinianism,⁴³ a term that at this time generally referred not to doctrine but to tolerance, and the habit of applying reason to the interpretation of Scripture; though his ideas of tolerance were undoubtedly derived from Socinian writings. Having espoused the royalist side in the civil war, he was expelled from his fellowship, and lived the rest of his life in poverty. His reputation as a scholar and as a preacher gave him much influence in making the atmosphere of the Church more hospitable to reason and tolerance in the Church, and thus paving the way toward Socinianism and the later Unitarianism.⁴⁴

The third and most famous of the three Oxford Latitudinarians was William Chillingworth (1602-44), considerably younger than Hales and Falkland.⁴⁵ He was well connected, and took his degree at Oxford, where he had already won a reputation for his ability as a debater. He was much concerned to find an assured foundation on which to rest his religious faith, and in his search for this he was persuaded to embrace the Roman Catholic religion, and entered a Jesuit seminary at Douai; but finding himself soon disappointed he returned to his old associations at Oxford, applied himself seriously to a free investigation of religious questions and eventually, after much wavering, took orders in the Church of England. He thus was drawn into a controversy then current between a Jesuit father who wrote under the name of Knott, and an Oxford divine, over the foundation of the authority of the Church of Rome, and to this he contributed his most famous writing, on which he had labored for some three years.⁴⁶ This work, *The Re-*

⁴³ Cf. Francis Cheynell, *Rise, Growth, and Danger of Socinianisme* (London, 1643). p. 39 f.

⁴⁴ Cf. Jared Sparks, *Collection of Essays and Tracts in Theology, from various authors* (Boston, 1825), vol. v for a sketch of Hale's life, and his writings here cited; *D. N. B.*, s. v.

⁴⁵ Cf. Pierre des Maizeaux, *Historical and Critical Account . . . of Chillingworth* (London, 1725); Tulloch, *Rational Theology*, i, chap. iv; *D. N. B.*, s. v.; Robert Aspland, 'Brief Memoir of Mr. Chillingworth,' *Monthly Repository*, ix (1814), 1, 137, 206; *Biographia Britannica* (London, 1747-66), iii, 508-518.

⁴⁶ The items in the controversy were: Edward Knott (pseud.), *Charity Mistaken* (1630); Christopher Potter, *Want of Charity justly charged* (1633); Knott, *Mercy and Truth* (1634); *id.*, *A Direction to be observed by N. N.* (Chillingworth) (1636); Shillingworth, *The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation* (1638).

ligion of Protestants, stands in the history of Protestant theology as one of its greatest monuments. In its main intent it is an investigation of the fundamental grounds of certainty in the field of religious truth. It is a master-piece of clear and logical reasoning, dignified and elevated in tone, straightforward and fair in manner, simple and earnest in style. To the main question as to the ultimate foundation of religious truth, his opponent maintained that it was the voice of the infallible Church. Chillingworth replied, in words that became classic, 'The Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants.' He maintained that Scripture and an honest, open mind are the only factors in the problem. Only truths necessary to salvation need be sought for, and they are so plainly taught in Scripture, and so few in number, that any open mind that will look for them may see them. All other doctrines on which men differ are arbitrary and unimportant. They should therefore be treated with full toleration, in the light of one's native reason. Religious certitude can thus be attained by any honest mind.

This plea of Chillingworth for the broadest toleration in most disputed doctrines, and his confident appeal to reason in determining them, naturally invited bitter criticism from his opponent, who was quick to hurl and press the charge that he was a Socinian in disguise. He had indeed early been so bold as to say that Arianism is no damnable heresy, he objected to the Athanasian Creed, especially its damnable clauses, and for a time he refused to subscribe the Articles of the Church; but though in these respects he sympathized with the Socinians, in doctrine he was no Socinian, but accepted the doctrinal standards of the Church in the broad and loose way that was to become usual among Latitudinarians. His book was approved by both Archbishop Laud and the King; and in the civil war that soon broke out he took the royalist side, became chaplain in the King's army, and in this capacity was taken prisoner. While thus in confinement, though mortally ill, he was persistently pestered by a noted Puritan divine, Dr. Francis Cheynell, an intense controversialist who attempted to convert him, and failing in this heaped reproaches on him, even at his grave, and in *Chillingworthi Novissima* (1644) a malignant book, which gave an account of his last days.

While Chillingworth can in no wise be claimed as a Unitarian yet his views spread widely in the established Church, and thus contributed to create an atmosphere in which Unitarianism was soon to find an

authentic voice and a numerous hearing, not as a condemned heresy, but as a development of historical Christianity; for thus far Unitarianism in England has been only a latent element of thought, with no written or spoken word to give it expression. It is at this point, early in the reign of Charles I, when the Presbyterian party was about to win the ascendancy over episcopacy in the direction of the Church of England, that we may take our leave of those venturesome spirits who, widely separated in space and time, may be counted precursors of our movement, and may enter another stage of our story in which the movement that we are following began to have a public voice, and to carry on propaganda through the press. We are to find the movement so long preparing brought at length to a focus in the person of one who has been called 'the father of the English Unitarians,' John Biddle.

CHAPTER XI

SOCINIANISM QUIETLY PENETRATES ENGLAND

FOR A FULL GENERATION after the burning of Legate and Wightman, though there were no further executions for heresy, the religious mind of England was being silently permeated by various influences that may well be traced to Socinian sources. The widest and deepest of these was the spirit of tolerance in matters of belief, which had been so persuasively encouraged by Acontius, and recommended also by the three Latitudinarian leaders whom we have mentioned. As the Socinian writings current at the period so strongly urged this principle, it was no accident that those in the Church who favored broad toleration should on this account alone, even if not Socinian in doctrine, have been charged by the strictly orthodox with being Socinians in disguise. The new tendency to appeal to reason in the interpretation of Scripture, instead of merely seeking Scripture support for traditional dogmas, also invited the same criticism and led in the same direction, while subtly undermining the foundations of the accepted confessions. Thus many minds were already prepared to agree with Socinian writings when once acquainted with them. Such writings, even though they were presumed to be banned, and were cautiously circulated, were now coming to be more and more common. Soon after the middle of the seventeenth century more than three score Socinian books had been published in Holland, either as reprints of Raków originals, or in Dutch or even English translations, and as England had at this period, in its religious life, closer relations with Holland than with any other country, undoubtedly many of these (not to mention any direct importations from Poland) soon found their way to England, where also indeed a few were even secretly printed. They were in the main brief doctrinal discussions by Socinus, Smalcus, Schlichting and other champions of Socinian views, or were commentaries on New Testament writings made by Crellius or other Socinian scholars. Mostly tracts or small books of pocket size, they were well fitted for clandestine circulation and use; and with their independence of traditional forms of doc-

trine and their fresh and reasonable interpretations of Scripture, they were eagerly read wherever seen. The authorities of the established Church do not seem to have made at this time any serious attempt to suppress these writings; for Archbishop Laud was much less concerned that members of the Church should all agree in the details of their professed beliefs than that they should all worship in the forms officially adopted. Thus it came to pass that Socinian views were quietly diffused among not a few of the Episcopal party now dominating the national Church.

With the Presbyterian element in the Church, however, not yet organized as a separate body though rapidly gaining in strength, it was different. Their leaders were all for strict purity in doctrine, concerned not only to have the Church thoroughly purged of any shred of popery in organization, government and form of worship and ruled by ministers of their own choice rather than by Bishops appointed by the King, but also to keep its doctrine as strict and pure as Calvin had left it. To this end, as early as 1572 a group of those that disapproved of government of the Church by Bishops met at Wandsworth in the outskirts of London and formed the first presbytery in England;¹ and not long afterwards in several counties classes were formed, and worshiped apart from the established Church. The movement quietly spread for two generations or so, largely among the middle class, maintaining strict standards of Puritan belief and life, until by 1640 the Presbyterian party had even gained the ascendancy in Parliament. Their ministers at this period were heads of a political as well as of a religious party; and their members in Parliament kept exerting increasing pressure in matters of religion, being constantly on the alert to discover anything that might discredit the episcopal party in its conduct of religious affairs. Hence in 1640 it was thought that the time had come to adopt measures for checking the progress of the Socinian heresy, which was well known to be silently making its way. The Convocation of that year, therefore, sitting as a Synod, framed a new body of Constitutions and Canons for the establishing of true religion, of which the fourth was directed against 'the damnable and cursed heresy of Socinianism.' It forbade the importation, printing or dispersion of Socinian books, and the preaching of Socinian doctrines, upon pain of excommunication, and forbade any university student or clergyman, except graduates in Di-

¹ Cf. Neal, *Puritans*, i, 243.

vinity or higher clergy, to have or read any such book, and ordered that all such books in other hands be surrendered or burned.² These Canons were in fact never enforced, having later in the year been condemned by Parliament as being beyond the power of the Convocation to enact, and framed too much in the interest of the episcopal party; but they furnish clear evidence that Socinian books were now in wide circulation, and that preaching of Socinian views was more or less common.³

As the evil still went on unhindered, the Puritan party in Parliament now determined to take the initiative in dealing with it, and in 1643 an ordinance was passed for the calling of an assembly of divines and others for settling the government and liturgy of the Church of England. It was composed of 121 clergymen, with 30 laymen as advisers, besides seven invited from Scotland.⁴ The different parties were represented, but the great majority were Presbyterians, while the few Episcopal divines soon withdrew. This Westminster Assembly of Divines as it was called continued to hold sittings until 1649. Its most notable acts were the framing of a Confession of Faith in place of the XXXIX Articles, the preparation of a corresponding Larger Catechism and a Shorter Catechism, and the making of a Directory of Worship in place of the Book of Common Prayer. No material doctrinal change was adopted, for Calvinism was retained as the accepted teaching of the Church, while Arminianism received no recognition; but government by presbyteries rather than by Bishops was formally established by Parliament in 1647.⁵ The Presbyterians, however, in order to gain the support needed for their interest, found it necessary to make common cause with those in Scotland, and to join with them in a Solemn League and Covenant to unite the two kingdoms in one religion. Although the Church of England thus became in theory a Presbyterian rather than an Episcopal Church (until the Restoration under Charles II in 1660), yet in the troubled state of national affairs the Presbyterian

² Cf. *Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical* (London, 1640), pp. 19-21; Francis Cheynell, *Rise*, p. 34; Neal, *Puritans*, ii, 299-307; *Monthly Repository*, x (1815), 430; Wallace, *Antitriton*, i, 64-67.

³ In London in 1644 a preacher at a religious meeting in Bell Alley declared that 'though Christ was a prophet and did miracles, yet he was not God'; and near Coleman Street there was a society denying the divinity of Christ, under the leadership of a certain Welchman. Cf. Bonet-Maury, *Sources*, p. 197.

⁴ The figures and the lists of names given do not quite agree.

⁵ Cf. John Hunt, *Religious Thought in England* (London, 1870), i, 198-205; Neal, *Puritans*, v, appendix viii.

system was never fully set up except in London and Lancashire.⁶ The episcopal party had never approved of it, and the Independents now rapidly increasing thwarted it; and after they adopted a Declaration of their own at the Savoy Palace in 1658⁷ they entertained hope that their own form of church polity might prevail in the nation. Yet though agreeing with the Presbyterians in doctrine, they differed from them in upholding toleration, which the Presbyterians detested and contemptuously nicknamed 'the great Diana of the Independents.'

From now until the passage of the Act of Uniformity (1662) religious questions were discussed with great feeling, and the leaders of the Puritan party were constantly on the alert. Of these leaders the most active and prominent was the Rev. Francis Cheynell⁸ (1608-65), an influential member of the Assembly, whom we have already met in anticipation as a bitter opponent of Chillingworth. He had already in 1643 published his *Rise, Growth and Danger of Socinianism*,⁹ a book designed to arouse great alarm among the orthodox, and showing wide reading and familiarity with the Dutch literature on the subject; and he charged that Socinianism was corrupting the very vitals of the Church. He was a native of Oxford, where he was educated for the ministry, and was an able scholar and preacher, being considered the most learned and acute of his party, but he was bigoted in mind, extreme in his zeal for his cause, and of violent temper. For having sided with Parliament in the civil war he was refused his degree, and thus lost his post at Oxford; but when Parliament in 1646 set out to restore the University, which in the Civil War had fallen into a deplorable state, it appointed him one of the seven most popular divines to spend six months there in an effort to reform the people by their preaching. When this labor proved futile he was made one of a board of twenty-four visitors authorized to make a thorough investigation and remove any found unfit.¹⁰ In this congenial occupation he made himself the most detested of the whole board. In the course of this search he came to the chamber of John Webberley, sub-Rector of Lincoln College. Searching among his papers Cheynell found all ready for publication an

⁶ Cf. Neal, *Puritans*, iii, 280-282.

⁷ Cf. Neal, *Puritans*, iv, 172-178.

⁸ Cf. Wood, *Athenae*, ii, 358-361; *Biog. Brit.*, iii, 597; Neal, *Puritans*, iv, 370.

⁹ For an extended analysis of it by the Rev. Robert Aspland, *v. Monthly Repository*, x (1815), 81, 162, 364, 497.

¹⁰ Cf. Neal, *Puritans*, iii, 360-406.

English translation of a book by Socinus, and several other Socinian books. All these were seized by the visitors in 1648, while Webberley himself was imprisoned and later expelled from the University.¹¹

Cheyne's services to his cause were suitably rewarded. He was given a Doctor's degree, made President of St. John's College, and Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity. The next year he was directed by Parliament to draw up a confutation of the Socinian denial of the Trinity. This appeared in London, 1650, with the title, *The Divine Trinunity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, a book of considerable size, showing wide reading, and discussing the doctrine in full detail in all its aspects. At the end he strongly urges that true Christians should have no communion with those that deny this doctrine, and he strikes out especially at Acontius, the first half of whose *Stratagems* had lately appeared in English translation, regarding which he had just reported to the Assembly that the book was very defective, and urged that all such writers should be punished by the magistrate. He also takes occasion in passing (pp. 426-430) to express his indignation at Col. John Fry (1609-57), who had been elected to Parliament by the Independents in 1648, had supported efforts for Biddle's release from prison the following year, and being accused of holding blasphemous views had published in defence two plain-spoken pamphlets in which he spoke disrespectfully of the Trinity, extolled the use of reason in religion, and cast ridicule upon the clergy. His books were ordered burnt, and he was expelled from Parliament in 1651.¹²

The cases of Webberley at Oxford and Fry in Parliament may be taken as manifestations, appearing on the surface at the Universities and in public life, of a ferment widely active in the minds of English Protestants during the period when matters of religious organization were so much disturbing the nation. This ferment was also shown in various little groups unconnected with either the Church or Puritanism, as well as in numerous polemical works which mirror for us the life of the time. Thus toward the middle of the century, when the Baptists were beginning to flock by themselves, it is reported that in 1644 at Bath and Bristol the human nature of Christ and the unipersonality of

¹¹ Cf. Wood, *Athenae*, i, p. 284 of the *Fasti*; Wallace, *Antitrin.*, iii, 158 ff; Bonet-Maury, *Sources*, p. 196.

¹² v. his *Accuser Sham'd* (London, 1648), to which a denial of the Trinity is appended; and *The Clergy in their True Colors* (1650). Cf. Wood, *Athenae*, ii, 359-361; Bulstrode Whitelock, *Memorials of English Affairs* (Oxford, 1853), iii, 291; *D. N. B.*, s. v.

God were discussed, and were also extensively propagated in that part of England. It was also remarked that the Independents, in their attachment to toleration, had in their congregations many Socinians and others of doubtful orthodoxy.¹³ These alarming symptoms were noted and deplored by orthodox writers in a steady stream of books. Thus the Rev. Thomas Edwards (1599-1647), one of the most zealous supporters of the Presbyterian party, in his *Antapologia* (London, 1644) attacked the Independents for their doctrinal laxity, and especially the Rev. John Goodwin, the boldest of their ministers, who was soon to translate Acontius into English. In the following year Edwards followed with intemperate fury in a much more extreme work, *Gangraena: or, a catalogue and discovery of the errours, Heresies, Blasphemies . . . vented and acted in England in these last four years* (London, 1645), in which he showed the ruinous results of toleration by enumerating 16 sorts of sectaries and 176 'errours, heresies and blasphemies' then current (a later edition considerably amplified the catalogue),¹⁴ of which 25 or more might be regarded as more or less Socinian. This abusive and grossly exaggerated book, which seems to have drawn freely from unverified loose rumors, called forth several spirited answers, especially Goodwin's *Cretensis: or, a brief answer to an ulcerous treatise . . . intituled Gangraena* (London, 1646); Edwards's final rejoinder to which (1647) treated 'toleration and pretended liberty of conscience' as 'the last and strongest hold of Satan.'

A much more temperate book than Edwards's, published in the same year, was *Heraesiography* (London, 1645) by the Rev. Ephraim Pagitt (1575-1647), who paid due attention to Arians and Socinians.¹⁵ The last action in this particular campaign was the publication of Dr. John Bastwick's *Utter Routing of the whole Army of all the Independents and Sectaries* (London, 1646), whose author evidently considered the fight as good as won. Nevertheless Socinianism continued unchecked. Cheynell complained as late as 1650¹⁶ that 'since the beginning of the year 1545 there have been many blasphemous bookes to the great dishonour of the blessed Trinity printed in England.' When the struggle

¹³ Cf. Edwards, *Gangraena*, *ut infra*, Part i, 1, Letters, etc., p. 1, 7-9, 26; Part ii, 13; Georgius Hornius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Francofurti ad Moenum, 1704), pp. 638, 642.

¹⁴ Cf. Wallace, *Antitirin.*, i, 79-92.

¹⁵ Cf. Wood, *Athenae*, ii, 102; Wallace, *Antitirin.*, i, 105-107. It was popular enough to reach the sixth edition in 1662.

¹⁶ In his *Divine Trinunity*, Epistle Dedicatory, p. B3a.

was just about to reach its culmination between the slowly waning power of the Presbyterians, who in matters of religion urged strict and forcible repression of all heresy, and the steadily rising power of the Independents, who favored a policy of reasonable toleration, there appeared an English translation of the first four books of Acontius's *Stratagems* (done, though anonymously, by an Independent minister, the Rev. John Goodwin above mentioned), dedicated to the Lords and Commons, and prefaced by a challenging introduction.¹⁷ It was reported to the Assembly of Divines, who were greatly excited, and voted that it be examined with all speed. The report was promptly made by Cheynell to whom it had been referred, and was unfavorable enough; but the Assembly had no power to decree punishment.

Parallel with these occurrences was the test case of Paul Best (1590-1657), Member of Parliament, who in 1645 was charged before the House with blasphemy in denying the Trinity and the deity of Christ. He was a gentleman of Yorkshire, who upon inheriting property left his studies at Cambridge and traveled in far countries in search of knowledge. In Germany, Poland and Transylvania he became interested in theology, had intercourse with Unitarians, and adopted their doctrines. Returning home, he communicated his new views as to the Trinity, privately and in confidence, to a clergyman whom he believed his friend, but who proved to be a tell-tale and at once reported him to the authorities. While his case was before the House he was long held in close prison, but was at length convicted and sentenced to be hanged. Though the authorities evidently wished him to be put to death, yet they were reluctant to incur public resentment, and deferred action. Hence after being held a year and a half he petitioned for release. At length after more than two years he made a conciliatory statement, though not a retraction, and in 1647 was quietly released, probably through Cromwell's influence.¹⁸

The cumulation of events above related — the two books by Cheynell, the similar books of Edwards and Pagitt, the cases of Webberley at Oxford and Fry and Best in Parliament, and the daring reprint of

¹⁷ Cf. Wallace, *Antitrin.*, i, 108-110; Cheynell, *Trinunity*, pp. 453-480. Cf. *supra*, p. 174 f.

¹⁸ Cf. Paul Best, *Mysteries Discovered* (London, 1647), the first Socinian book published in England; Whitelock, *Memorials*, i, 565, 572; ii, 2, 4 f, 181; Neal, *Puritans*, iii, 266; *Monthly Repository*, viii (1813), 109; 'Paul Best, the Unitarian Confessor,' *Christian Reformer*, ix, N. S. (1853), 493-503; Wallace, *Antitrin.*, iii, 161-167; D. N. B., s. v.

Acontius — at last spurred Parliament, all the time under pressure from the Westminster Assembly, to face the situation and take some drastic action. The Presbyterians in Parliament had some months before prepared a law for the punishment of heresies, but the sentiment against it was so strong that they had not ventured to bring it to a vote. But now, highly excited by recent events, finding that they had again a majority in the House, they ordered it to be brought in, and on May 2, 1648, there was passed, though not without strong opposition, 'An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, for punishing Blasphemies and Heresies,' which has been justly styled the 'Draconic Ordinance.'¹⁰ This shocking law was the final effort of the Presbyterian party to suppress freedom of discussion by public law. It is quite too long for quotation; but it provides with great particularity that 'all persons that willingly, by preaching, teaching, printing or writing, maintain and publish that the Father is not God, the Son is not God, or that the Holy Ghost is not God, or that they three are not one eternal God, or that Christ is not God equal with the Father [besides seven other named heresies], shall be adjudged guilty of felony; and in case the party upon his trial shall not adjure his said error he shall suffer the pains of death, without benefit of clergy.' The ordinance also specifies sixteen less serious errors to be punished by imprisonment. But the fact is that though the ordinance was passed it was never enforced. Dissensions broke out among the members of the House of Commons, many of both privates and officers in the army were amenable to the law, and the Presbyterian power in Parliament was tottering to its fall before the rising Independents. The ordinance therefore remained a dead letter, and seven months later Pride's Purge gave it the *coup de grace*.

It was fortunate for the Unitarian cause in England that this was so, for otherwise the first Englishman to avow Unitarian beliefs boldly and clearly, and to publish them fearlessly, undeterred by repeated imprisonments, must assuredly have fallen victim to the ordinance, which the guardians of orthodoxy were ready to invoke against him. His life and writings deserve our especial attention since, in contrast to the various isolated and disconnected instances thus far reviewed, they con-

¹⁰ The text in full in Crosby, *English Baptists*, i, 197-205; Wallace, *Antitrin.*, iii, 588-590; cf. Neal, *Puritans*, iii, 418-425; Toulmin, *Biddle*, pp. 59-65; Henry Scobell, *Collection of Acts and Ordinances* (London, 1658), p. 149 f.

stitute the effectual beginning of what was henceforth to be a continuous and connected historical movement. During the same period in which the attention of the Long Parliament and the Westminster Assembly was being drawn to dangerous outbreaks of Socinian heresy at Oxford and even in Parliament itself, and alarm against them was being stirred up by books from guardians of the faith, similar trouble, independently of these, was brewing in another quarter at a distance from the capital. Its fountainhead was one John Biddle,²⁰ born in 1615 at Wotton-under-edge in Gloucestershire, the son of a tailor or woollen-draper. In the local school he early showed such promise as to attract the attention of Lord Berkeley, who assisted him in his preparation for the University. At nineteen he became a student in Magdalen Hall,²¹ Oxford, where in due time he took his first degree, became tutor, and in 1641 was given the degree of M. A. Even as an undergraduate he was remarked for his independence of mind, being 'determined more by reason than authority'; and his reputation as scholar and teacher was such that soon after graduation he was on recommendation from the University elected master of the Crypt free Grammar-school at Gloucester,²² where he came to be much esteemed as a teacher and for his personal character.

Continuing here his study of the Scriptures, he became so familiar with the New Testament that he knew it by heart, in both Greek and English, all but the last few chapters; the result of which was that, though he had hitherto read no Socinian writer, he became convinced that the common doctrine of the Trinity has no support in either Scripture or reason. He told others of his view, and in 1644 he was promptly

²⁰ The name is variously spelled. He was baptized and was matriculated at Oxford as Bidle, but later in life (cf. *U. H. S.*, London, vi, 236, 1937) he used the form Biddle. In an age when persons were often inconsistent in the spelling of even their own names, forms were used indifferently, sometimes even in the same writing in contemporary works as late as the quarto "Unitarian Tracts" toward the end of the century.

Cf. (John Farrington), *Johannis Biddelli (Ingli) Academiae Oxoniensis quondam Artium Magistri celeberrimi vita* (London, 1682). (Anon), *Short account of the life of John Bidle, M. A.*, in vol. i of "Unitarian Tracts" (London, 1691); Wood, *Athenae*, ii, 299-306, also reprinted in *Monthly Repository*, xiv (1818), 345-349, 413-419; Crosby, *English Baptists*, i, 206-216; *Biog. Brit.*, ed. 2 (London, 1778-1793), ii, 302-309, s. v.; Whitelock, *Memorials*, ii, 204; iv, 160; Neal, *Puritans*, iv, 122 f; Toulmin, *Biddle*; Wallace, *Antitritin.*, iii, 173-206; *D. N. B.*, s. v.

²¹ Amalgamated with Hertford College in 1822.

²² The school was connected with the parish of St. Mary-de-Crypt in Southgate. Biddle's chamber is extant over the gateway directly opposite the house of Robert Raikes.

reported to the Magistrates, who called him to account for heresy. In defence he submitted a confession of his faith, which was indeed unacceptable, though when he had rewritten it under pressure it was allowed to pass. But as his conscience was not at ease, he now carefully drew up *XII Arguments drawn out of the Scripture*, refuting the traditional doctrine of the Godhead of the Holy Spirit. Each argument is stated in form of an exact syllogism, resting at every step solely on statements of Scripture. They all go to establish the point that the Holy Spirit, instead of being a person in the supreme Deity, is an intelligent person distinct from God. Biddle had composed these arguments for the personal use of his friends, but one of them proved false and betrayed him to the Magistrate. Though ill of a fever he was lodged in jail to secure his appearance when Parliament should call up his case. He was soon set at large, however, on the security of a gentleman in Gloucester, and it was six months before he was summoned to appear before Parliament. At the middle of 1546 Archbishop Usher of Ireland passing through visited Biddle and tried to convince him of error, resting his argument on the tradition of the Church; but Biddle remained unmoved, and soon afterwards was summoned to appear in London. Here he freely admitted that he denied the deity of the Holy Spirit, and asked leave to discuss the subject with some competent theologian; but whether the members were preoccupied with more urgent matters, or had doubts of securing a conviction, the case was allowed to drag on until the next spring when, impatient of his long detention without trial, he wrote an urgent letter of appeal to the younger Sir Henry Vane, who had years before been a near contemporary of his in Magdalen Hall, and was now a member of the House of Commons, where he had been a member of the committee to whom Biddle's case had been referred, and was known to be of liberal sympathies. Biddle besought him in pity either to have his case brought up for decision, or to procure his discharge.²³ Sir Henry's efforts were ineffectual, and nothing was accomplished. Instead Biddle was placed in the custody of one of the officers of the House and was still kept under restraint for the next five years. It was apparently an easy confinement, for his case was referred to the Assembly of Divines for consideration, and he often appeared before them to argue his cause, though

²³ The letter, dated April 1, 1647, is appended to the first tract in vol. i of "Unitarian Tracts," 1691. Cf. Toulmin, *Biddle*, pp. 32-39.

without result. He had ample leisure for study, and was supplied with materials for writing, and his friends were evidently permitted to see him. He thus did not pass his time in idleness, and it is clear that his mind and pen kept busy with the theme nearest his heart. If his cause could not have a hearing in Parliament, he determined that the public at large should judge of it through the aid of the press. Accordingly he now put into print his *XII Arguments* (together with his letter to Vane), hoping thus to call attention to his case and perchance to elicit some reply to his views.

The publication of this little tract of less than a score of pages created a great sensation. Biddle was at once summoned to appear at the bar of the House, where he acknowledged his responsibility, and was then sent back to prison. His blasphemous pamphlet was called in and burnt by the hangman,²⁴ but the demand for it was so great that a second edition was printed before the end of the year. This event, together with the reprint of Acontius's book, the case of Webberley at Oxford, and those of Paul Best and Col. Fry in Parliament, all falling at just this time, led to an urgent demand for Biddle's death, and to the hurried enactment of the Draconic Ordinance mentioned above. Unterrified by the ordinance, and meanwhile grown more confident and bold, Biddle now took the aggressive and followed up his tract on the Holy Spirit with two others of greater compass the same year: *A Confession of Faith touching the Holy Trinity according to the Scripture*; and, *The Testimonies* [of six early Fathers and six later writers] *concerning that one God, and the Persons of the Holy Trinity*. In these tracts Biddle shows thought more mature than in the former one. While he still closely follows Scripture, he goes on to comment on it at length, arguing his case, and appealing to reason as well as to Bible texts. He has now become acquainted with writings of Socinus, though not accepting his view that the Holy Spirit is only a divine power. While he sets forth various evils that have come from the doctrine of the Trinity, and make it a stumbling-block to faith, he still believes in a sort of Trinity, though not in an equal deity of the three persons, since Christ is a strictly human being. In support of his views he cites at length the writings of Church Fathers, not as authorities, but in order to confute those that appeal to them.

²⁴ It was at once attacked in print in an anonymous tract entitled *God's glory vindicated and blasphemy confuted*, etc. (London, May 15, 1647).

Biddle's three little works were not suffered to go without reply. The Rev. Nicolas Estwick, pastor of a congregation in Northants, published (London, 1648) an answer to the *XII Arguments*, entitled *Pneumatologia or, A Treatise of the Holy Ghost, in which the Godhead of the third Person of the Trinitie is . . . defended against the Sophisticall subtilities of John Bidle*. The author undertakes to prove the deity of the Holy Ghost by Scripture and reason, answers Biddle's arguments seriatim, and ends by claiming victory.²⁵ In the same year also William Russell, who had been a boyhood schoolmate of Biddle, issued another answer to his little tract, entitled *Blasphemoktonia the Holy Ghost vindicated* (London, 1648), and again in the same year appeared yet another reply, written by the celebrated Presbyterian scholar, the Rev. Matthew Poole, and entitled *Blasphemoktonia The Blasphemer Slain, or, a Plea for the Godhood of the Holy Ghost, vindicated from the cavils of J. Bidle* (London, 1648; ed 2, 1654). To these replies Biddle made no rejoinder, whether because he had already stated his case so forcibly that he was content to let it rest there, or because he was now too much occupied with other interests in that exciting period to have a taste for fruitless controversy. Nor in all the long six years of his imprisonment, with all the many divines then sitting in the Assembly at Westminster, was he ever visited by any minister save one, an eager controversialist who later became Bishop Gunning of Ely.

Along with those, however, that reviled Biddle, and persecuted him, and said all manner of evil against him, he had also contemporaries that thought well of him, sought his companionship, and became his disciples. Not to mention Col. John Fry and Paul Best,²⁶ whose cases were up in Parliament in the very period of Biddle's long imprisonment, and who may or may not have been influenced by his writings, at least two preachers openly espoused his views of Christian doctrine. One of these was the Rev John Cooper of Cheltenham near Gloucester.²⁷ He

²⁵ Eight years later Estwick completed his confutation of these three early writings of Biddle, which had recently all been revised and reissued in 1653, in a book of over 500 pp, entitled *Mr Bidle's Confession of Faith*, etc (London, 1656), but while really confuting the *Confession*, he mistakenly supposed it to be the now notorious *Catechism*, of which he evidently had only hearsay knowledge. Cf Wallace, *Antitrin.*, 1, 131 f.

²⁶ *v supra*, pp 189, 191.

²⁷ Cf (Stephen Nye), 'Grounds and Occasions of the Controversy,' etc, p 16, in vol v of *'Unitarian Tracts'* (London, 1698), Walter H Burgess, 'John Knowles and Henry Hedworth,' *Transactions of Unitarian Historical Society* (London), v (1931),

was born at Worcester in 1622, and after studying in Balliol College, Oxford, succeeded Biddle (though not immediately) in 1647 as Master of the Crypt School. This post he held until 1652, when with the allowance of Parliament still under Presbyterian influence he became minister of the near by Cheltenham parish church, which he held until about 1660, when he was ejected.²⁸ After this he continued minister of a little group of liberal Nonconformists at Cheltenham²⁹ until his death in 1665.³⁰ That he had been much influenced by Biddle can scarcely be doubted; and a few months before Biddle's death one of his disciples named Hedworth³¹ endeavored to bring Cooper and Knowles of Pershore a few miles away, to Oxford, in order to meet Christopher Crellius, one of the exiled Polish Socinians, who had come to England to solicit aid for the exiled brethren at Kreuzburg.³² Cooper's health forbade him to make the journey, though a year or so later he reports having collected a few pounds for the exiles. His congregation survived him a few years, and then dwindled away. The modern Unitarian church at Cheltenham is not descended from this movement.

The other preacher mentioned as a follower of Biddle was John Knowles.³³ It is likely that he was a native of Gloucester, and that he there had relations with Biddle. He was an Independent lay preacher in 1648 and a thorough New Testament scholar, and at about the same time with Biddle's troubles there he was called before the Parliamentary Committee at Gloucester and questioned, being suspected of being an Antitrinitarian. In his reply he confessed some doubts on the subject,

1-16, Alexander Gordon. John Cooper, the Cheltenham Unitarian, *Christian Life* (London), xxv, 128. March 18 1899. *id.* John Cooper of Cheltenham, 1622-1665, *id.* *op.* xlv, 278, Aug. 30 1919, correcting Wallace. *Antitrim* iii, 360-362, and John Goding, 'The History of Unitarianism at Cheltenham, *Christian Reformer* (London), xi, N S (1844), 386-391.

²⁸ He was at this time a Socinian, the only one of the ejected who held these views at the time of ejection.

²⁹ This has been incorrectly spoken of as a Unitarian congregation, and the earliest in England. But the name Unitarian did not begin to be used in England until a decade after this. The group was undoubtedly Antitrinitarian, for Cooper's intimate relations were with those that inclined that way.

³⁰ Not 1682, as a forged entry in the Cheltenham parish register has it.

³¹ *v. infra*, p. 199.

³² Cf. vol. 1 of the present work, p. 496.

³³ Cf. Nye, *loc. cit.*, Burgess, *op. cit.* D N B, s. v. Wallace, *Antitrim*, iii, 210-221, William Urwick, *Sketches of Nonconformity in Chester* (London, 1864), pp. 15-18, 465 f.

and admitted having been with Biddle, but was evidently let off. We next find him serving in the parliamentary army, and in 1650 as a lay preacher serving for a short time as chaplain of the garrison at Chester. His preaching in this office stands as the earliest recorded case of avowed Antitrinitarianism in an English pulpit. The Rev. Samuel Eaton, a prominent man of the period in Cheshire, was his predecessor in this post, and had removed elsewhere. He became deeply concerned upon hearing that Knowles was preaching Arianism, and sent his old congregation a paper on the Godhead of Christ. To counter this, Knowles circulated anonymously Biddle's *Confession of Faith*; and a controversy between the two ensued.³⁴ The Council of State now took a hand, and ordered an investigation of Knowles, but he had already left Chester. He was followed to Gloucester, and there was ordered to be examined by the Mayor as to his preaching against the deity of Christ. Later in London he had probably been one of the little group that gathered about Biddle in one of the free periods before or after his island imprisonment, and at length settled down to a quiet life among his books at a friend's house at Pershore. Here for some years he devoted himself to reading, at the same time carrying on an interesting correspondence with Henry Hedworth (to be spoken of below), concerning the interests of Biddle and his disciples, and he was also active in collecting money in aid of the Polish exiles, as Cooper was doing. In 1665 he was arrested (possibly on suspicion of sedition against Charles II) and taken to London under guard, where he was held in prison for about a year in the time of the plague. When friends had secured his release, he is supposed to have preached to the group of Biddle's followers, while he mingled with the London clergy and was well esteemed by them, and with one of them had a brief doctrinal controversy.³⁵ We have no further record of him save that dying he bequeathed his books to the library at Gloucester, and left a third of his property for the relief of men suffering religious persecution, and for other charities.

In connection with Cooper and Knowles mention has been made of

³⁴ The items in it were: Knowles, *A Friendly Debate . . . concerning the Divinity of Jesus Christ* (London, 1650); Eaton, *the Mystery of God Incarnate* (London, 1650); do., *A Vindication, or further Confirmation . . . to prove the Divinity of Christ* (London, 1651). These last two were large volumes, answering Knowles's small book.

³⁵ Cf. Robert Ferguson, *Justification only upon Satisfaction . . . asserted against the Socinians* (London, 1668); Knowles, *An Answer to Mr. Ferguson's book . . . wherein he is friendly reprov'd, fully silenced, and clearly instructed* (London, 1668).

Henry Hedworth (1626-1705),⁸⁶ a gentleman of Huntingdon, who in the background worked modestly but effectively to forward their common cause. He was a friend and supporter of Biddle, with whose little group in London he had intimate relations, one of whom writes of him as 'a gentleman of excellent learning and worth.'⁸⁷ Cooper held him in very high esteem, and the sentiment was reciprocal. He evidently had the time and means to be often with the brethren in London and to share their enterprise, and he was able also to journey to Holland to meet Polish or Transylvanian Unitarians there, and to make them his guests in England. He thus took Christopher Crellius to Oxford to meet liberal spirits there, circulated his letter of appeal, and otherwise assisted him in 1662 in his campaign for raising funds for his countrymen in exile; and he later brought over from Holland a Transylvanian Unitarian⁸⁸ for a visit of ten days. After Biddle's death he tried to persuade Knowles to come to London and shepherd the bereaved little flock, who were but few in number, held their meetings in great secrecy, and were sadly in want of competent leadership. Late in life he cooperated with Firmin and Nye in publishing the first three volumes of "Unitarian Tracts," 1691-95. He died in London in 1705 at the age of 78. Meanwhile Hedworth fell into controversy with the Quakers, in which William Penn took part. To this he contributed two pamphlets, *The Spirit of the Quakers Tryed*, and, *Controversy Ended* (London, 1672/3), in which he charges the Quakers with equivocation as to the divinity of Christ. The second of these books is noteworthy for the fact that it contains the earliest known instance of the word Unitarian in English print.⁸⁹ Hedworth evidently picked up this term from the Transylvanian Unitarians whom he met in Holland, and found it more acceptable than the term Socinian, which recent controversies had made odious. Penn at once adopted it, and it became henceforth the accepted designation, and gradually supplanted the other term.

To return now from Biddle's chief friends and disciples to the experiences of Biddle himself. After the death of Charles I in the first

⁸⁶ Cf. Burgess, *Knowles and Hedworth*, *supra*, pp. 186 f, n. Alexander Gordon, 'Henry Hedworth and the early Unitarian Movement,' *Christian Life*, xviii, 399, Aug. 20, 1892.

⁸⁷ Cf. (Stephen Nye), 'Brief History of the Unitarians,' p. 47, in "*Unitarian Tracts*," vol. i, 1691.

⁸⁸ Perhaps Dáiel Márkos Szentiványi *v. supra*, p. 148.

⁸⁹ On pp. 53 f, 56 f. The earliest occurrence was long believed to be on the title-page of Nye's *Brief History*, etc., ed. 1, 1687, republished in vol. i of "*Unitarian Tracts*."

month of 1649, and the rising of the Westminster Assembly a month later, and the rise of Cromwell to commanding influence, with his clear leaning toward reasonable toleration, the situation of Biddle in custody seems to have been somewhat relieved. Persons that had become interested in him were allowed to visit him, and among them some of influence. Of these one was a gentleman of Staffordshire, a Justice of the Peace, who having given security was allowed to take him into the country, made him his chaplain, had him appointed preacher at a neighboring church, and finally left him a legacy. When this became known to the presiding Judge in London, he at once recalled Biddle and had him more strictly confined than before. In this closer confinement Biddle soon began to suffer extreme want, and was at length reduced to a bare diet of milk morning and night, until the kindness of one that knew of his fine scholarship procured him employment as a corrector of proof of a new critical edition of the Septuagint then in process of publication.⁴⁰ Early in 1651/2 Cromwell secured the passage of an Act of Oblivion which set free (with a few exceptions) all that stood accused of any crime. Biddle, being thus restored to liberty, at once improved it by gathering a little congregation of his friends, who met every Sunday for worship and the study of the Scriptures.⁴¹ These meetings, freely discussing doctrinal questions in the light of Scripture teachings, came to a number of fresh conclusions, which seem to be reported to us in a work by Sir Peter Pett (1630-99),⁴² who was apparently one of the participants. As reported, their conclusions went a good way beyond merely the doctrine of the Trinity and the deity of Christ. The group were at first known as Biddellians, or Socinians, and their meetings became so well known as to give offence to the London ministers, though there was no law under which they could be suppressed; but Dr. Gunning, who had already visited Biddle in prison, and was keen in pursuit of heresy, sought to attain his end in another way. He came one day to the meeting, with witnesses, and boldly in-

⁴⁰ *Vetus Testamentum Graecum ex versione Septuaginta, etc.* (Londoni, Rogerus Daniel, 1653). The first edition of the Septuagint published in England.

⁴¹ This has sometimes been called the first Unitarian church in England; but there appears no evidence that it was organized as a church, or was more than an informal meeting of people of kindred mind; and in any case the name Unitarian did not become current in England until somewhat later.

⁴² *The Happy Future State of England* (London, 1688), preface, p. E*; cf. Toulmin, *Biddle*, pp. 79-81; Wallace, *Antitrin.*, iii, 186 f; Wood, *Athenae*, ii, 1008.

interrupted the proceedings by beginning without warning a scholastic disputation on the deity of the Holy Spirit, in which Biddle, though unprepared, sustained his part well. His opponent returned the second and yet the third time, but to no purpose.

Biddle found that his cause of a reformed scriptural religion had not stood still during his absence from the scene. An Oxford scholar, Thomas Lushington, suspected of Socinianism, who had some years earlier published a translation of a Socinian work, Crellius's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, had now also published one of Schlichting's *Commentary on Galatians*.⁴³ Also a new edition of the *Racovian Catechism*, in Latin, an earlier edition of which had been burnt by King James in 1614,⁴⁴ had been brought out in London (with the imprint "Racovia") in 1651/2, supposedly at his instigation, with a brief life of Socinus appended. It was ordered burnt in the following month.⁴⁵ In the same year an English translation which some ascribed to him⁴⁶ was also published, ostensibly at "Amsterledam" but actually in London. Meantime Biddle's writings were reaching Holland. Professor Johannes Cloppenburg of the Frisian university at Franeker obtained from a Scottish gentleman named William Hamilton, whom he met at Bristol, a copy of Biddle's *XII Arguments*, and discussed the tract with him. Then returning home he shortly before his death put his defence of the doctrine into print in a writing⁴⁷ three or four times as long, evidently fearing that Biddle might bring new strength to the Socinianism in Holland which he had but lately been endeavoring to refute. At about the same time the Oxford Divines had become so much alarmed by the publication of the *Racovian Catechism* in England that they requested Dr. John Owen, Vice-Chancellor of the University, to refute its teaching. Hence he published his *Diatriba de Justicia Divina, seu Justitiae Vindicatricis Vindiciae* (Oxoniae, 1653), in which he attacked the Socinian writings then becoming notorious, not only the *Racovian Catechism*, but also works of Crellius and

⁴³ Cf. Wood, *Athenae*, ii, 261-263.

⁴⁴ v. *supra*, p. 174.

⁴⁵ Cf. Whitelock, *Memorials*, p. 521; Thomas Rees, *The Racovian Catechism* (London, 1818), p. A5b.

⁴⁶ But in all probability by Biddle. Cf. Joshua Toulmin, *Memoire of the Life, . . . of Faustus Socinus* (London, 1777), p. 260.

⁴⁷ *Vindiciae pro Deitate Spiritus Sancti adversus Pneumatomachum Johannem Biddellum Anglum* (Franeker, 1652); also in his *Theologica Opera omnia*, ii, 451 ff (Amstelodami, 1684).

Socinus, and endeavored to answer their arguments.⁴⁸ In this year Biddle (no doubt subsidized by his followers as a missionary enterprise for their cause) published several little writings, some if not all of which he had himself translated.⁴⁹ These little writings taken together were designed to soften religious prejudice, and to recommend that Christians should decide all questions in dispute by Scripture interpreted by reason rather than by reference to creeds or traditions, and to advocate mutual toleration.⁵⁰

Toward the end of 1653 Cromwell was made Protector of the Commonwealth, and his first official act was to set forth an Instrument of Government in forty-two articles, which he took oath faithfully to observe. In the three articles relating to religion, freedom of worship was guaranteed to all professing Christians, and protection of all in the exercise of their religion was promised to all professing the fundamentals of Christianity. These fundamentals indeed were not specified, and a committee was named to determine the matter; but before their report was adopted Parliament was dissolved, and nothing more was heard of it.⁵¹ As Cromwell was known to be a friend of religious freedom, Biddle took fresh courage and renewed his activities. After the middle of the year, therefore, he published *A Twofold Catechism: the One simply called a Scripture-Catechism: the Other, a brief Scripture-Catechism for Children*.⁵² These Catechisms were perhaps deliberately

⁴⁸ Also translated as *A Dissertation on Divine Justice*, etc., in his *Works* (Edinburgh, 1853-55), x, 480-624

⁴⁹ Namely Samuel Przypciovius, *The Life of that Incomparable Man, Faustus Socinus Senensis* Joachim Stegmann, Sr., *Brevi Disquisitio or, a Brief Inquiry touching a better way than is commonly made use of, to refute Papists, and reduce Protestants to Certainty in Religion* (also reprinted in *The Phoenix* (London), II, 315-347 (1708), Przypciovius, *Dissertatio de Pace*, etc., or, *A Discourse concerning the Peace and Concord of the Church*, also in *The Phoenix*, II (1708), 348-390. All these were issued in 1653 in London, with no author's name given

⁵⁰ For a fuller account of them, with a digest of contents, cf. Toulmin, *Biddle*, sec. xi

⁵¹ Cf. Wallace, *Antitium*, I, 118-122

⁵² Although the *Racovian Catechism* had already been in print in England for two years, the present Catechism is in no sense a rehash of that, and shows few traces, if any, of its influence. The choice of topics and the order of them are as different as possible, and the manner of treatment of them is quite unlike. The answers are exclusively in the language of Scripture. The *Catechism for Children*, again, is not a mere abridgment of the other, having less than half as many chapters, and being different in order and contents

Ten years later both these Catechisms were translated into Latin for the use of foreign scholars, by Nathanael Stuckey, a lad of fifteen, whom Biddle had assisted in his studies,

intended to offer the public an offset to the two Westminster Catechisms already widely circulated. The contrast between them is very striking. The one presents the Protestant doctrinal system in conventional terms under the categories of Calvinism; the other presents the Christian faith in simple terms in the very language of Scripture, 'composed for their sakes that would fain be meer Christians and not of this or that sect.' It does not directly attack controverted doctrines, but either ignores them outright, or else at most asks questions so skillfully framed that the answers, taken from Scripture itself, force the reader to the desired conclusions.⁵³ In his preface Biddle complains that existing catechisms seem to be based not on the word of God, but on confessions composed by men and having little relation to Scripture, and he urges the reader to take the language of Scripture literally, and to discard terms invented by men. With this introduction he proceeds in twenty-four chapters to cover briefly the whole range of Christian doctrine and duty. Apart from its being in its language much simpler than the existing catechisms, and its rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity and of the deity of Christ, perhaps its most striking feature, and the one that invited the sharpest criticism was its literal acceptance of scripture references to God, whom it took to be a visible, tangible person, in form like a man, inhabiting a certain place, having human parts and passions, and limited in knowledge—in short, the crudest anthropomorphism.

The reaction of foreign theologians was prompt and decisive. Nicolaus Arnold, a Polish scholar who had come to fame as Professor at the University of Franeker, and was just publishing a large work in which his students had refuted the Racovian Catechism topic by topic in forty-six separate disputations,⁵⁴ interrupted his preface to note the appearance of the new book and brand it as Socinian, and promised

and whose widowed mother was one of Biddle's congregation. Upon his premature death soon after, she offered to take into her vacant home two children of the exiled Polish minister, Christopher Crellius, and to take care of their education. Appended to this translation is also a letter from Danzig, addressed to Biddle by Jeremias Felbinger, a recent German convert, expressing his joy at the accession of Biddle to the party of the Antitrinitarians. Cf. F. S. Bock, *Bibliotheca Antitrinitariorum* (Regiomonti et Lipsiae, 1774-84), I, 348; Wallace, *Antitrim*, III, 326-328, 591; *Monthly Repository*, XI (1816), 633 ff.

⁵³ Cf. Toulmin, *Biddle*, pp. 90-106.

⁵⁴ *Religio Sociniana, seu Catechesis Racoviana Major . refutata* (Amstelodami, 1652).

a refutation of it in due time.⁵⁵ The promised work was delayed for several years, but it was at length issued to counteract the influence in Holland of books then so easily brought over from England, which might otherwise add strength to the spreading Socinianism and Anabaptism. It confutes in order the chapters of the Catechism. In the same summer with Arnold's earlier work appeared the second volume of a work by Samuel Maresius (Des Marets),⁵⁶ Professor at Groningen, in the preface to which he utters a lament as to 'this sad time, when the Socinian plague, deservedly called the culmination of all wickedness, seems now to have established its capital in England . . . whence there has just been brought over a *Two-fold Catechism* in English, published in London, which seems to be snatching the palm from that of Raków.' He then goes on to fill a whole page with the dreadful errors with which this deadly book teems. Among other things, he is alarmed that the new book has appended a catalogue of Socinian books to be had in English, thus indicating that Socinus himself seems now to be in high esteem with the English people.

While Dutch theologians were thus concerned with Biddle's latest (and last) work, it was by no means overlooked by the guardians of orthodoxy in England. No more than mentioning a brief belated reply⁵⁷ to his earlier writings, and an enlarged reprint in 1655 of Poole's *Blasphemer Slain* (ed. 1, 1647) we notice first an anonymous parody on the *Scripture Catechism*, entitled *Biddle Dispossesst, or his Scripture perverting Catechism reformed by Scripture* (London, 1654). When the attention of Parliament was finally called to Biddle's outspoken book, the members were quick to take action. He was brought to bar in September and examined; and in due time the committee reported that his book contained many blasphemous and heretical opinions, whereupon it was voted that all copies be seized and burnt by the common hangman, and that Biddle himself be committed to close imprisonment, which was done on December 13, and the books burnt the next day.⁵⁸ The Presbyterians also urged that he be put to death, but there was

⁵⁵ Cf. his *Atheismus Socinianus a Johanne Bidello Anglo, nuper sub specioso Scripturae titulo orbi obtrusus, jam . . . detectus atque refutatus* (Franekeræ, 1659).

⁵⁶ Cf. his *Hydra Socinianismi Expugnata* (Groningæ, 1654).

⁵⁷ Cf. John Brayne, *The Divinity of the Trinity cleared*, etc. (also printed under the title, *Mr. John Biddle's Strange and New Trinity*) (London, 1654), in answer to Biddle's *Apostolical and True Opinion concerning the Holy Trinity* as reprinted in 1653.

⁵⁸ Cf. Whitelock, *Memorials*, iv, 160; Neal, *Puritans*, iv, 122 f.

evidently much opposition, and finally at the end of May he was set free. Meantime Parliament had ventured to try the method of reason instead of force to stem the mischief of his books. The Council of State requested Dr. John Owen, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, an Independent minister and a celebrated theologian of great learning, to prepare a reply to Biddle; which he did, under the title of *Vindiciae Evangelicae . . . in confutation of a Scripture Catechism written by J. Biddle* (Oxford, 1655).⁵⁹ It has been well called 'a learned and elaborate treatise,' and consists of nearly 700 8° pages as compared with the 140 little pages of the work criticized. The author lays his background in a lengthy preface in which he sketches the history of Socinianism and its antecedents from the earliest heretics down, and concludes with this warning for the present: 'Doe not look upon these things, as things a far off, wherein you are little concerned: the evil is at the doore; there is not a City, a Towne, scarce a village in England, wherein some of this poyson is not poured forth.'⁶⁰ He takes some offence that Dutch writers have taken it upon themselves to confute an English writer as though it were their own affair; but he then goes on to examine Biddle chapter by chapter, beginning with 40 pages on Biddle's preface of 5; and midway of his treatment he interpolates 150 pages in criticism of that part of the *Racovian Catechism* dealing with the person and offices of Christ, which seemed to him to merit more attention. The discussion is solid and scholarly throughout, and brings together well-nigh everything that is to be said on the subject; and it must be admitted that his close reasoning exposes many weak points in Biddle's strict literalism.

All the time that Biddle lay in prison, the sentence of death was hanging threateningly over his head; but before the matter could be brought to a vote Parliament was dissolved with his case still undetermined. At length, after nearly six months, the charge against him was abandoned and he was set free. In the meantime interest in him had increased, the demand for his Catechism had grown, and his followers had multiplied so that he at once resumed his meetings with them. But in less than a month he was again in difficulty. Several of his followers had been members of a Baptist church, whose minister, the Rev. John Griffin, took alarm and challenged Biddle to a public disputation on the

⁵⁹ Also in his *Works*, vol. xii.

⁶⁰ Cf. *Vindiciae*, p. 69.

supreme deity of Christ,⁶¹ to be held in his own meeting-house. Before the discussion could be concluded a group of bigoted fanatics, composed of three booksellers in St. Paul's Churchyard, filed an information against Biddle and caused his arrest on a charge of blasphemy and heresy under the 'Draconic Ordinance' of 1648, which had lain dormant so long that it was supposed to be obsolete, and to be superseded by Cromwell's Instrument of Government.⁶² Biddle was then indicted and committed to prison, where counsel was reluctantly granted him. Cromwell now, being baited on the one side by Presbyterians and Independents who pressed for the enforcing of the law against blasphemy, and on the other by Baptists and other friends of liberty who relied on his sworn promise to guarantee religious freedom, was forced to realize that whether Biddle were acquitted or condemned his government would be embarrassed. He therefore cut the knot by taking the case into his own hands. Accordingly, after detaining him for some months in Newgate, he banished Biddle to the Scilly Islands, for life imprisonment in St. Mary's Castle. During the time both before and after his banishment, both Biddle's friends and his enemies were active in his case. He himself wrote letters of appeal to Cromwell and the President of the Council; and two anonymous narratives were published, evidently from Baptist sources. Also a signed petition from several London churches, which had first been presented to Cromwell in 1551 asking for repeal of the Draconic Ordinance, was now presented again.⁶³ *A Petition to the Officers and Souldiers of the Army*, etc, asking for Biddle's release followed early the next year. Biddle, however, was now for the time beyond the reach of harm or help, and so remained for three years, during which his situation was somewhat relieved by a grant from Cromwell of a hundred crowns a year for subsistence, while he occupied his time in further study of the Bible. His friends continued to sue for his release, and at length he was brought up to London

⁶¹ Cf. Toulmin, *Biddle*, pp. 117-119, Wood, *Athenae*, II, 304, Crosby, *English Baptists*, I, 209-217, Wallace, *Anntrin*, I, 128 f, II, 189 f

⁶² *u. supra*, p. 192.

⁶³ Respectively *Two letters of Mr. John Biddle, late prisoner in Newgate, but now hurried away to some remote island, A True State of the case of Liberty of Conscience . . . together with a True Narrative of the cause, and manner, of Mr. John Biddle's sufferings, The Spirit of Persecution again broken loose . . . against Mr. John Biddle etc*, *The Petition of divers gathered Churches . . . for declaring the Ordinance . . . for punishing Blasphemies and Heresies null and void*. All, London, 1555. Cf. also Crosby, *English Baptists*, I, 209-215; Wallace, *Anntrin*, II, 196-201.

and, no accuser appearing, was discharged but a few months before Cromwell's death. During Biddle's retirement but two controversial works had appeared besides Estwick's belated reply referred to above,⁶⁴ neither of them of much consequence. One of these was the Rev. Nicholas Chewney's *Anti Socinianism* (London, 1656), which in fact had nothing to do with Biddle (though it had appended to it a little writing entitled *Haeresiarchae, or a Cage of Unclean Birds*, being brief sketches of a score of earlier writers in the Socinian tradition), but was a reply to a New England writer's recent book, supposed to be Socinian in tone,⁶⁵ and the Rev. Edward Bagshawe's *Dissertationes Duae Antisocinianae, in quibus probatur Socinianos non debere dici Christianos* (London, 1657).

Biddle's little company of followers in London apparently held together during his imprisonment, for as soon as he was set at liberty he began, true to form, to meet with them again in meetings held every Sunday afternoon. But within a few months Cromwell died, and as the new Parliament called by his successor was expected to be hostile to Biddle, he was persuaded by a noble friend to retire into the country for as long as the session continued, after which he returned to his place. After the restoration of Charles II to the throne (1660), and the revival of episcopacy in the Church, non conformist worship fell under the ban, and Biddle refrained from public meetings, and held his private ones more seldom; but within less than two months officers discovered them, entered his lodgings where he was worshipping with a few friends, and haled them all away to prison without bail. At first no law could be found under which they could be indicted, but at length action was taken under the common law, ending in a fine of twenty pounds for each save Biddle, who was fined one hundred pounds. Being unable to pay this he was retained in prison. In less than a month, overcome by the close and foul air, he fell victim to a dangerous disease, and though he was finally allowed to be removed, he expired two days later (September 22, 1662) in his 47th year, having said, as he saw the end approaching, that 'the work was done'.⁶⁶

In what has been said of Biddle, we have been mostly concerned with

⁶⁴ *v. supra*, p. 196

⁶⁵ William Pynchon, *The Meritorious Price of our Redemption* (London, 1650)

⁶⁶ His body was laid to rest in a cemetery near Moorfields, and a monument was placed, but the site has long since been obliterated.

his writings and his sufferings as a reformer of Christian doctrines; but his earliest biographer judged that his greatest merit lay not in his efforts to spread his views of religious truth, but in his zeal for promoting holiness of life and manners, which was always his final aim in teaching. For he used to tell his friends that no religion would benefit a bad man; and he had little interest in doctrines as such apart from a reverent, godly life to which they contributed. Unlike many religious controversialists he was not by nature quarrelsome or opinionated; but as a scholar who had given long consideration to the matters involved, and was true to his convictions, he was content to state his case and let the evidence he offered speak for itself. Hence he was modest and self-effacing in bearing, and tolerant of differences in opinion. As to his personal character, he was irreproachable in conduct, temperate in food and drink, and earnest in the cultivation of a life in every way virtuous; while in matters relating to religion or the Scriptures he was to the highest degree reverent in speech and action. His little band apparently did not long outlast his leadership of it, for no competent leader appeared, and the danger of severe persecution was ever present. Two or three, however, are known to us, on whom his influence was marked and enduring, who faithfully watched the seed that he had sown, and a short generation later brought about a revival of his writings and teachings as part of a movement that had a profound effect in the development of thought and policy in the Church of England. We shall trace this movement in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XII

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH IN CONFLICT WITH SOCINIANISM: THE TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSY

WITH THE RESTORATION of monarchy in England at the accession of Charles II on the one hand, and the death of Biddle on the other, the history of our movement enters a new period with a changed background. Charles, presumed to be a supporter of the established Church, though at heart a Catholic, was received with undisguised joy by the Presbyterian party, as denoting the end of the dominance by the Independents; but he soon disappointed their hopes. He is reported to have confided to one of his courtiers on the very day after his restoration that 'Presbyterianism is no religion for a gentleman'; and as to religion the policy that he at once adopted was to secure religious peace in his kingdom by enforcing uniformity in the worship and administration of the national Church. For between churchmen and Puritans the affairs and usages of the Church had fallen into great confusion under the Commonwealth; and in the effort to restore order and harmony the King now sided with the old church party. Already in 1661 the Corporation Act had been passed excluding from executive offices in municipal corporations all that had not within the year past communicated according to the rites of the Church, thus placing offices of incorporated towns solely in the hands of members of the Church of England;¹ and now in May, 1662, a bigoted anti-Puritan Parliament passed the Act of Uniformity applying yet stronger pressure upon the non-conforming clergy. It required that every clergyman declare his unfeigned assent to everything in the Book of Common Prayer, and forbade any one not episcopally ordained to preach or conduct public worship except under the prescribed form.² The Puritan

¹ Cf. Neal, *Puritans*, iv, 592.

² Cf. Neal, *op. cit.*, iv, 324-330. This Act was followed in 1664 by the *Conventicle Act*, condemning to banishment or death any refusing to go to Church, and forbidding any to hold or attend any religious meeting except those of the Church of England, under pain of imprisonment, fine or banishment. Again in 1665, by the *Five-Mile Act*, for-

clergy were given about three months in which to decide which course to take. The great majority of them stood fast. No fewer than 2,257 of them,³ including a great many of the ablest, most learned and most honored men in the service of the Church, refused to deny their convictions and violate their consciences by submitting to the demands of the Church party, and were consequently 'ejected' from their livings, left their pulpits and people, and 'went out not knowing whither they went,' to live they knew not how. What they suffered and how steadfastly they bore their sufferings during the quarter century until the Toleration Act gave them relief in 1689 furnishes one of the most inspiring pages of heroism in the history of the Christian Church. Within this period some 8,000 (Neal, by a misprint, said 38,000) of these nonconformists are said to have died in prison, and 60,000 suffered otherwise for their dissent, with loss of property amounting to £2,000,000.⁴ All that, however, is apart from the main current of the stream of history that we are following here. Suffice it to say that it is of the direct descendants of these Protestant Nonconformists, as the Puritans were henceforth to be known, who could not be forced to avow beliefs that they held to be untrue, and to worship God under forms they abominated as wrong, that those congregations were largely made up which a century later began to cohere into a group of congregations known as Unitarian. The significance of this episode of our history is that it marks one long step in the progress toward more perfect freedom of thought and of worship in religion.⁵

For the present the nature of the struggle changes. Questions of doctrine become quiescent, as of minor interest, and give way to the (for

bidding nonconformist ministers to come within five miles of any city or town where they had ministered, or to teach in any school, under heavy fine. Finally in 1673 by the *Test Act* requiring any holder of public office to receive the sacrament in Church in public, under pain of a fine of £500. Cf. Neal, iv, 357 f, 366 f, 422 f, all summarized, 423 f.

³ So given in Edmund Calamy *Nonconformists Memorial* ed. 2 by Samuel Palmer (London, 1778), i, pref, p. 1, n. The figure usually given is the round number of 2,000. But A. G. Mathews, *Calamy Revised* (Oxford, 1934), p. xiii, reduces the number to 1760, besides 149 from Universities and schools.

⁴ Cf. Edward Cary Pike, *Four Lectures on English Nonconformity* (London, 1895).

⁵ Of the ejected clergy themselves the only one known to have adopted Unitarian views later was William Manning, an Independent of Peasenhall, Suffolk, who was converted to them by reading Dr. Sherlock's *Vindication of the Trinity* (1690). Cf. Wallace, *Unitarianism*, iii, 495-503. *v. infra*, p. 219.

the time) more vital ones of liturgical *vs.* free worship, prescribed prayers *vs.* voluntary ones, white surplices *vs.* black Geneva gowns for the clergy, and the like as the centres of emphasis. With the accent thus shifted, active controversies about disputed doctrines were continued, if at all, beneath the surface of church life instead of in public assemblies or in print. For the death of Biddle in 1662 checked the growth of his movement as an organization for reformed worship, though there are faint echoes of meetings of his disciples in London as late as 1696—doubtless in a private house. Even when his congregation at last faded away, the influence of his life and teachings long survived in a few minds, as we shall see a little later. Before following them, however, it will be well to take account of some stirrings of thought in other quarters since the Restoration.

While the heat of religious controversy considerably subsided during Biddle's long imprisonment, yet there were evidences that the matters in question though less openly discussed, were still occupying the minds of many. Thus the Rev. Matthew Wren, Jr., published in 1660 a work entitled *Increpatio Bar Jesu . . . ab imposturis perversionum in Catechesi Racoviana*, etc., being an extensive collection of notes or essays that his father of the same name, Bishop of Ely, had during his imprisonment written in criticism of various passages. It called forth no reply, but in 1665 (the same year with Biddle's *Two-fold Catechism*) appeared a translation of Crellius's *De Uno Deo Patre*,⁶ supposed to have been done by the Rev. John Goodwin. It was a much extended treatment of the theme handled in the author's *De Deo et ejus Attributis* prefixed to Völkel's *De Vera Religione*,⁷ and was a solid and vigorous assertion, on the basis of Scripture, of the supreme deity of the Father only, and a decided opposition to the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit. The publication is supposed to have been subsidized by Firmin.⁸ More active controversy was excited by the publication in 1669 by the Polish Arian, Christopher Sandius, Jr., of a work on ecclesiastical history, in which he undertook to prove from history that the Arian view of Christ was that of the first Apostles, and had always

⁶ John Crellius Francus, *The Two Books touching One God the Father* (Kosmoberg-London, 1665), with rubricated title. The same sheets reissued with the title, *The Unity of God asserted and defended*, etc. (London, 1691).

⁷ Cf. vol. i, of the present work, p. 418, n. 27.

⁸ *v. infra*, p. 219.

obtained among the orthodox.⁹ Imported from Holland, it evidently had wide circulation and aroused considerable alarm in church circles in England. The author had spent some time at Oxford, and having ransacked the libraries there for antitrinitarian material he produced a work showing thorough research and wide scholarship, and bringing to light many traces of the Arian view not only in the ante-Nicene Fathers, to whose authority the orthodox party had always confidently appealed, but through all the Christian centuries since, and even in the very leaders of the Reformation. Such a challenge as this work offered could not be received in silence, and answers of varying weight kept appearing for thirty years¹⁰ until the question was swallowed up in the Trinitarian Controversy among the members of the established Church.

At just this period the Quakers were beginning to come into notice, and were becoming objects of persecution. Their beliefs were as yet loose and undefined, but it is noteworthy that in their earliest systematic work, Robert Barclay's *Apology* (1676), the doctrine of the Trinity is not once referred to. William Penn, however, in a tract (1668) defending Quakers against the charge 'that the Quakers held damnable doctrines,'¹¹ had denied outright the current doctrine of the Trinity and two others involved in it, refuting them at length from both Scripture and reason. This gave such great offence to the Church authorities that Penn was committed to the Tower, where he lay in strict isolation for some months, until influential friends secured his release. In the meantime, hearing that reports were circulating that did him injustice, he published early the next year an apology entitled *Innocency with Her Open Face*, in which he strove to correct some serious misunderstandings of his tract. This cooled the friendship that the followers of Biddle had entertained for him, too hastily claiming him as a recruit to their cause, and they now blamed him for abandoning his and their principles, and equivocally confessing the deity of Christ.¹² But the truth is that he had never professed the Socinian doctrine, still less the Uni-

⁹ Christopher Christophori Sandius, *Nucleus Historiae Ecclesiasticae, exhibitus in Historia Arianorum* (Cosmopolis Amsterdam, 1669), ed. 2, enlarged (Coloniae-Amsterdam), 1676.

¹⁰ Cf. Bock, *Historia*, I, 745, 748.

¹¹ *The Sandy Foundation Shaken* (London, 1668). Cf. Wallace, *Antitritin*, I, 160-169.

¹² The strained feeling continued for several years. Witness the spirited controversy in 1672/3 between Fox, Hedworth and Penn, to which reference has been made above *v. supra*, p. 199.

tarian, and was at most only a sort of Sabellian. Nevertheless, he had clearly abandoned the Athanasian Trinity; and modern Unitarians later reprinted his *Sandy Foundation* as the witness of a highly honored man supporting their views.¹³

Although no one appeared at this time to take the lead in promoting the views of Biddle or of Socinus, yet despite any prohibitions of canons or laws they were evidently spreading with little hindrance, through books brought over from Holland. Thus the Puritan poet and Member of Parliament, Andrew Marvell (1621-78) complains in 1672, 'There is a very great neglect somewhere, wheresoever the inspection of books is lodged, that at least the *Socinian* books are tolerated, and sell as openly as the Bible.'¹⁴ In view of this Dr. John Owen had already been moved to come forward again, supplementing his defence of the Trinity by a further work,¹⁵ in which he condensed and supplemented his former treatise. Also a comment from an unexpected quarter in the Catholic Church, which had been originally called forth in 1659 by the reprint of Biddle's first three tracts six years before, was now reprinted in an enlarged edition in 1674. This was the now little-known book entitled *Controversy-Logick; or, the Method to find out the truth in debates of religion*. Though anonymous, it was written by Thomas White, Gentleman (1593-1676), President of the English College at Lisbon. It was an interesting and calm discussion of the principles and method to be observed in controversies between Protestants and Catholics on questions of religion, and was almost the sole contribution from an English Catholic source.

A very striking example of the penetration of heretical views is seen in the case of the great Independent, Milton. He had for ten years been active in the government as Cromwell's Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and is believed to have had much influence with Cromwell in promoting measures of liberty and tolerance. It had long been known that after Milton's retirement from public life he was occupied in his time of blindness with the composition of several works, of which one was 'a body of divinity,' and that the manuscript had been left with an amanuensis to be published after his death in 1674; but it subsequently

¹³ Cf. Wallace, *loc. cit.*; *Monthly Repository*, xii (1817), 348, 481.

¹⁴ Cf. his *Rehearsal Transposed*, etc. (London, 1672), p. 172, cited in Wallace, *Antitrin.*, i, 169 f.

¹⁵ *A Brief Declaration and Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity, also of the Person and Satisfaction of Christ* (London, 1669); also in his *Works*, ii, 365-454.

disappeared, and was supposed to have been destroyed, until it came to light in the State-Paper Office in London in 1823. The discovery created a tremendous literary sensation, and by royal command the original Latin (*De Doctrina Christiana*) was translated by the King's chaplain and published two years later.¹⁶ Various passages in *Paradise Lost* had long raised some suspicions as to Milton's entire orthodoxy, and now this work gave indisputable proof that in his theology Milton was a convinced Antitrinitarian, and in his doctrine of Christ an Arian.¹⁷ The religious world of England was startled and shocked at the unwelcome discovery — for a time even incredulous, for the Bishop of Salisbury the following year published a futile attempt to show that the manuscript was not by Milton at all.¹⁸ Though two leading Church periodicals apparently ignored the work altogether, the rest of the religious press proceeded to make the best of an unfortunate matter. Over half a hundred important articles have been noted, apart from many in the secular reviews;¹⁹ and they cover the whole range from appreciation and sympathy through apology and regret to scorn and contempt.²⁰

It was not Milton's aim in this work to offer a revision of existing doctrinal systems, but independently of these to set forth a system of the teaching contained in Scripture, on which it was to be based at every step. The parts of it that concern us here are three chapters in the first Book treating 'Of God,' 'Of the Son of God,' and 'Of the Holy Spirit.' He had long reflected on the subject, used his texts very carefully and logically, and adhered to them strictly, though it is hardly to be supposed that he was unacquainted with heretical writings, or that he can wholly

¹⁶ *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine, compiled from the Holy Scriptures alone* (London, 1825). The publication at once occasioned the writing of two famous essays on Milton: by Macaulay in the *Edinburgh Review*, xlii (1825), 304-346; and by Channing in the *Christian Examiner* (Boston), iii (1826), 29-77. Cf. Wallace, *Antitrinitarianism*, iii, 328-357.

¹⁷ Cf. Herbert McLachlan, *The Religious Views of Milton, Locke and Newton* (Manchester, 1941).

¹⁸ Cf. Thomas Burgess, *John Milton, Protestant Union. A Treatise on True Religion*, etc. (London, 1826).

¹⁹ Cf. the section on 'The Religious Press *vs.* John Milton, Heretic,' in Francis E. Mineka, *The Dissidence of Dissent* (Chapel Hill, 1944), pp. 84-97.

²⁰ The most important notices were a series of six successive monthly articles by the Independent scholar, the Rev. John Pye Smith, in the *Evangelical Magazine*, N. S. iv (1826); and one in the *Monthly Repository*, xx (1825), 609, 687, 748; also the Rev. John Evans's articles, *id. op.*, xx, 710-713; xxi, 724-731. Cf. Francis E. Mineka, 'The Critical Reception of Milton's *De Doctrina Christiana*,' *University of Texas Studies in English* (Austin, 1943), pp. 115-147.

have escaped being influenced by them. Careful studies of the writings concerned make it seem not unlikely that he had some acquaintance with Servetus or Ochino, or with both;²¹ though whatever similarity may be shown, Milton was certainly too thorough a scholar to be a mere copyist.

At about the period in which Milton was tacitly harboring the Arian heresy, a contemporary English Poet, John Dryden, lately turned Catholic, sharpened his pen against the doctrine of Socinus, whom he intensely disliked as the embodiment of reason in religion in place of submissive and reverent faith; thus at once witnessing to the currency of Socinian thought in the circles about him, and to his abhorrence of its impious blasphemies.²² From yet another quarter a voice was raised breathing a spirit of tolerance wide enough to embrace both Arians and Socinians. Herbert Croft, Bishop of Hereford, published (anonymously) in 1675 a little book entitled *The Naked Truth*,²³ in which, in order to consolidate all Protestants against Popery, he pleaded for broad comprehension, proposing as a basis of union in the Church only the Apostles' Creed, as containing everything necessary to salvation. He urged that faith can not be forced; that men should not be compelled to conform; that forms and ceremonies are not vitally important; and that non-episcopal ordination is valid. Bishop Burnet thought he went too far in thus surrendering the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds; but though broadly latitudinarian he was not Socinian. Yet the discussion that followed, in which several voices were raised pro and con, opened the way to the Trinitarian Controversy that sprang up a dozen years later. Again, in 1680, the Rev. George Ashwell (1612-93), Rector of an Oxfordshire parish, was moved by the wide dispersal, despite Church

²¹ Cf. Martin A. Larson, 'Milton and Servetus; a study in the Sources of Milton's Theology,' *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, xli, no. 4 (Dec., 1926), pp. 891-934; Louis Aubrey Wood, *The Form and Origin of Milton's Antitrinitarian Conception* (London, Ont., 1911). The latter of these two refers to the influence of Ochino's *Dialogues* of 1563.

²² Note especially the early part of his *The Hind and the Panther* (lines 52-61, 150-153), and *Religio Laici*, lines 311-313.

²³ In three editions (n. p., 1675); reprinted in Somers, *Collection of . . . Tracts* (London, 1748-51), ser. I, vol. iii, pp. 329-338; and with introduction by Bp. Henson (London, 1919); answered by (Gilbert Burnet), *A Modest Survey of . . . Naked Truth*; (Francis Turner), *Animadversions upon . . . Naked Truth*; (Peter Gunning), *Lex Talionis*; defended by (Andrew Marvell), *Mr. Smirke; or, The Divine in Mode*, all (London, 1676) reprinted in part in "Unitarian Tracts," v, last essay. Cf. Ethyn W. Kirby, "'The Naked Truth': a Plan for Church Unity," *Church History*, vii (1935), 45-61.

canons, of Socinian books, which were eagerly read by the younger students, and often in English translation were perverting the vulgar, and also by the fact that even some of the clergy were preaching and publishing in favor of Socinian doctrines, to write an earnest book, *De Socino et Socinianismo Dissertatio*, planned as an introduction to a larger work, which however did not appear. He gave a full account of the origin and history of Socinianism, and especially of the life and teaching of Socinus, to whom he paid the tribute of a notable appreciation (p. 18), and, with particular reference to the writings of Stegmann and Smalcius against the Trinity, he treated especially of the use of sound reason in religion, on which the Socinians laid so much stress, and then took up the main articles of the Socinian faith and criticized them. These separate and widely scattered instances furnish ample evidence that despite all efforts to maintain the purity of the faith in the Church, yet heresies were breaking out in many quarters.

Returning now from this digression to our movement where it was left by Biddle's death. Of his disciples, the one that contributed most to the movement was doubtless Thomas Firmin.²⁴ He was born at Ipswich in 1632 of a Puritan family in moderate circumstances, who gave him a plain, practical education, and sent him up to London when about fourteen to be apprenticed to a dealer in woolen goods, who worshipped in the congregation of the broad minded Independent preacher, John Goodwin, perhaps the most progressive Puritan of his time, whom we have already met as translator of Acontius into English in 1648, to the alarm of the orthodox in Parliament. Whether the lad was personally known to Goodwin or not, he was surely influenced by the preaching he heard from him, since he used to take down all the sermons in short hand and to ponder them afterwards. While still an apprentice he must also have attended some of Biddle's meetings in the short period between his imprisonments, and have been deeply impressed by him, for he ventured to deliver to Cromwell a petition for Biddle's release from jail, and is said to have been told in reply, 'You curl-pate boy you, do you think I'll show any favor to a man who denies

²⁴ Cf. *Life of Mr Thomas Firmin, late Citizen of London* (London, 1698), including *Sermon on his death* and *An Account of Mr Firmin's Religion*. Alexander Gordon 'Thomas Firmin, Unitarian Philanthropist,' in his *Addresses Biographical and Historical* (London, 1922), Harold W. Stephenson, 'A Seventeenth Century Philanthropist,' *U H S* (London), vol. vi, Wallace, *Antiquities*, III, 272-389.

his Saviour, and disturbs the government?'²⁵ His apprenticeship finished, Firmin set up business for himself in 1655 in Lombard Street as a mercer, and in this business prospered for more than forty years. It was at the very beginning of this career that Biddle, in the short period when he was left at liberty, was taken into Firmin's lodgings as his guest. In the intimacy thus afforded he doubtless had great influence not only in confirming in Firmin belief in the absolute unity of God, but in instilling in him those principles of Christian charity in the practice of which he became a pioneer in the history of British philanthropy. Biddle's stay under Firmin's roof was but brief, for after about two months he was again arrested and in the end was sent to the Scilly Isles as we have seen. It is believed that Firmin was one of those that persuaded Cromwell to give Biddle a pension, and added to it themselves, and that it was due to their efforts in his behalf that he was at length set free.

After this brief contact with Biddle, soon followed by Biddle's death, Firmin seems for some years not to have been actively concerned in religious affairs. The times were not too favorable, and the one that might have been his inspirer was no more. He therefore transferred his controlling interest from the doctrines of Christianity to the application of its principles to the problems of society. His philanthropic interests took a wide range. In 1662, perhaps incited thereto by Biddle's friend, Henry Hedworth, he was active in soliciting aid for the Polish Socinian exiles in whose interest Christopher Crellius had come to England;²⁶ and again in 1681 he was no less active for the relief of the Polish Calvinists, whose turn for suffering persecution also had now arrived. At the same period he took the lead in relieving the needs of a large number of Huguenots who had taken refuge in England, providing lodgings for them, and assisting them to become established in linen manufacture. Finally, at the end of the reign of James II, when the Irish Protestants were suffering bitter persecution and were fleeing to England, Firmin was the Commissioner through whom nearly £60,000 were received and disbursed for their relief, which the Irish Bishops handsomely acknowledged in a letter addressed to him. But it was in local philanthropy that he became most distinguished. Following the

²⁵ Cf. Thomas Birch, *Life of . . . John Tillotson* (London, 1752), p. 319; cited from White Kennet, *Register and Chronicle*, etc. (London, 1728), p. 761.

²⁶ Cf. vol. i of the present work, p. 496 f.

practice of Biddle he began early in life to visit the needy in person in order the better to understand their condition. Thus also he extensively relieved sufferers by the terrible plague in 1665, and by the great London fire in 1666, attending to the distribution of supplies contributed by the more fortunate. By establishing factories to furnish them employment he helped the destitute to help themselves, and thus assisted many hundreds of families of the London poor. He relieved several hundred that had been imprisoned for debt and promoted legislation for their relief. He investigated cases of want, and reported their need to those that would contribute to funds, of which he rendered strict account, and he printed *Proposals for the Employment of the Poor for the Prevention of Idleness*, which stands as a landmark in the history of charities. As Governor of St. Thomas's Hospital in Southwark he was largely instrumental in securing government aid in rebuilding it; and as Governor of Christ's Hospital School for nearly twenty-five years he caused great improvements to be made in it. In all these enterprises Firmin had of course the generous co-operation of many citizens, and so much enjoyed their confidence that he was able to gain their support for any cause that he recommended. All these things, however, are not directly in the line of our history, but are rather an interlude, from which we must presently return to the work of religious reform, which after remaining dormant for many years, at length toward the end of his life became one of his leading interests.

During the reigns of Charles II and James II Firmin was probably too much engaged in public affairs and in philanthropic work to give much open attention to spreading Unitarian views, though without doubt much more went on by way of conversation behind closed doors and at dinners than has been recorded; but it is evident that the influence of Biddle upon his young friend had not evaporated into thin air. Through his charity work and otherwise Firmin formed a wide and intimate acquaintance with many of the clergy from Archbishop Tillotson down, as also with leading dissenting ministers; and he often had them as guests at his table. One of these, who deserves our special notice, was the Rev. Stephen Nye (1648-1719), grandson of the Rev. Philip Nye, one of the most prominent of the early Independent ministers, a graduate of Cambridge and Rector of a tiny church with a poor living at Little Horstead, Herts. Heterodoxy had now for some time been wide spread in the Church, and not unknown among non con-

formists. Many of the clergy were insensibly slipping into Socinianism, and Nye was one among these who felt ill at ease with the formulas of the Church. It was thus natural that through his intimacy with Firmin he should have been attracted by the Unitarian doctrine of Biddle, though he regarded its crude anthropomorphism as no better than atheism. He succeeded, however, in winning both Firmin and Hedworth to a more spiritual view of the Supreme Being,²⁷ and henceforth, taking advantage of the King's declaration of indulgence,²⁸ the three carried on through the press an active campaign for the Unitarian views.

Nye wrote anonymous tracts, Hedworth passed judgment on them, and Firmin bore the expense of the printing. The first of the tracts thus published was *A Brief History of the Unitarians, called also Socinians* (1687). It consisted of four letters written by Nye to Firmin and recommended by Hedworth (though neither of them is named). The historical part is very brief, and the rest is taken up with a statement of the Unitarian doctrines, and a discussion of the Scripture texts on which they are founded. This tract at once attracted attention, and kindled the flames of a great controversy in the Church of England, the Trinitarian Controversy as it is called, which in its narrower compass lasted until about the end of the century, and in its broader connections ranged further yet. It was soon followed by a provocative little tract, *Brief Notes upon Athanasius's Creed*, which takes up the Creed clause by clause, keenly lays bare its inconsequent reasoning, and its contradictions with both reason and Scripture, and concludes that it ought therefore not to be retained in any Christian church. These two tracts called forth a formal defence of the doctrine of the Trinity in a famous 'vindication' by the Rev. Dr. Sherlock, to be spoken of more at length a little later.²⁹ The 'Brief Notes' were then republished in enlarged form as *The Acts of the Great Athanasius*, which include a sketch of the life of Athanasius, and show him up as an ecclesiastical scoundrel, and tax Dr. Sherlock with tritheism. A commission had recently been appointed to propose a revision of the liturgy, in which, *inter alia*, the Athanasian Creed was objected to by many; and even while the matter was under discussion this tract was brought to their notice as being a

²⁷ Cf. Stephen Nye, *The Explication of the Articles of the Divine Unity, the Trinity, and Incarnation* (London, 1715), pp. 181-193.

²⁸ Cf. Neal, *Puritans*, v, 29-31.

²⁹ *v. infra*, p. 227.

book 'of very dangerous consequence to the Christian religion,'³⁰ and it raised considerable commotion. At the end of the year the main items in the Unitarian side of the discussion that followed were brought together into one collection for purposes of propaganda, headed by a reprint of Biddle's three early tracts of more than forty years before. The collection was issued with the title, *The Faith of One God . . . asserted and defended* (London, 1691), and constitutes the first volume of the series commonly cited as 'The Unitarian (or Socinian) Tracts'.³¹

The first considerable reaction to these Unitarian Tracts was from Dr Jonathan Edwards, Principal of Jesus College, Oxford,³² who seems to aim especially at answering Biddle's three tracts here reprinted. He reports swarms of Socinian books as having suddenly appeared and being dispersed through all parts of the kingdom. While admitting the moral excellence of the Socinian writings, he says that they tend to infidelity and enmity to revealed religion, to opposition to mysteries, and to latitudinarianism, the most dangerous of all, and he writes to show the opposition between Socinianism and the Bible, especially the New Testament. It is therefore impious and absurd.

In the first three volumes of these Unitarian Tracts the guiding influence was that of Stephen Nye, and though ably assisted by other anonymous writers he had himself contributed a large part of the material. It had never been his purpose to deny the doctrine of the Trinity outright, for he was an active clergyman in the Church, but rather to find recognition within its fold for a definition of the doctrine in terms to which Unitarians like himself could with clear conscience agree. The controversy stirred up by these tracts called forth contributions from a dozen or so of Bishops, clergymen, scholars, and Dissenting ministers, some of them hostile, indeed, but others showing a broad mind and a conciliatory spirit. They differed widely in the explanations

³⁰ Cf. Birch, *Tillotson* pp. 180-200. Wallace, *Antitrim* 1, 106-200.

³¹ Of these tracts there were five successive collections dated from 1691 to 1703 each with a numbered title. The first three were subsidized by Firmin. Those published after his death seem to have modified their scope, and included new contributors. A sixth collection is sometimes mentioned, but no copy is found with the usual title and as such copies vary in contents they are doubtless collections individually made and bound up. For lists of contents, and descriptions, see Wallace, *Antitrim*, 1, 229 f. 236 f. 265 f. 361 f. III, 604-607. Herbert McLachlan, 'Seventeenth Century Unitarian Tracts' in his *The Story of a Non-conformist Library* (Manchester, 1925), pp. 53-87. Hunt, *Religious Thought*, II, 273-278, III, 604-607.

³² *A Petition against Socinianism showing the direct and plain opposition between it and the religion revealed by God in the Holy Scriptures* (Oxford, 1698-1703). Issued in four separate parts variously dated, the first in 1693.

that they offered of the doctrine, and at least six distinct ones were proposed, to some of which no very serious objection was felt. The writers fell in the main into two general classes, the Real and the Nominal Trinitarians. The Real Trinitarians took the Trinity literally in terms that fell little short of bald tritheism, and defended it as ultimately an inexplicable mystery; but this view, when once clearly stated and avowed, was ere long disowned and rebuked by authority as heretical. The Nominal Trinitarians on the other hand met the challenge not by taking the terms of the doctrine in their literal meaning as language is used to-day, but by going back to what it was maintained had been their ancient sense. Although in the common mind this aroused no suspicion of heresy, it was in fact practically Sabellianism.³³ But since this view had now been favored by several Bishops whose orthodoxy was beyond question, the Unitarians became satisfied that the majority of the Doctors of the Church did not mean by their scholastic terms any sort of tritheism (which was what they had objected to), but only a 'Nominal' Trinity, and hence they regarded themselves as sound and orthodox churchmen. Having thus found room for themselves within the Church, they were therefore content to abide in peace, and largely withdrew from the controversy, which now began to drift into other channels, and left the conservatives within the Church to carry on disputes with one another.

It was at this juncture that Firmin died in 1697 in his 66th year, worn out by his many activities and by chronic disease. He had never withdrawn from the Church of England, and with its Bishops and many of its clergy he was on excellent terms, though they were well aware of his unorthodox beliefs. His aim, and that of the tracts that he sponsored, had been to secure such breadth in the interpretation of the Church's liturgy that Unitarians might conscientiously remain in its communion.³⁴ The three collections of tracts now published had tended to this end, and Firmin apparently felt that he was succeeding in his effort; for in the year after his death his biographer (Mr. Nye?) declared,

³³ Cf. 'Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity,' *Unitarian Tracts*, iii (1695), 66-68; also 'A Discourse concerning the Nominal and Real Trinitarians,' *id. op.*, vol. iii. Both anonymous, but by Nye. Wallace, *Antitrin.*, i, 340-342.

³⁴ There were those that were more impressed by his tendencies toward heresy than by his countless services to philanthropy. One such felt moved in the following year to preach in St. Paul's before the Aldermen a sermon on 'A False Faith not justified by care for the poor. Proved in a sermon' by the Rev. Luke Milbourn; but he was soon suitably answered in a published 'vindication.'

'Upon the whole we may say, There is now no Socinian controversy The misunderstanding that was common to both parties, the Church and the Unitarians, is annihilated' ³⁶ Firmin, however, was concerned lest Unitarians, though remaining in the Church, should unwittingly be led by the equivocal language of the liturgy to relapse into tritheistic notions of the Trinity. He therefore meant to continue his efforts to purify the faith of such false and corrupt ideas, and he intended, had not death prevented him, to establish meetings for Unitarian worship, not as offshoots from the Church but as fraternities within it, which should particularly emphasize the unity of God. It is in fact recorded that such a public meeting-place was set up in London for the Unitarians. ³⁸

As his final contribution to the long controversy Nye now published two more tracts, still anonymous, summing up results; ³⁷ and when later a new controversy was in progress over the Arian doctrine about Christ, he felt it safe to come out into the open as author of a book supporting the liberal views ³⁸ One further result followed from this protracted discussion The name Unitarian became established as that of the heretical party In the *Unitarian Tracts* it was consistently used in an inclusive sense, covering Sabellians, Arians, Unitarians and Socinians; but the name Socinian was now discarded as inappropriate The English followers of Biddle had in fact never been properly Socinian; for though more or less influenced by Socinian writings, and broadly sympathizing with the Socinian spirit, they differed in several important details from the Socinian doctrine: ³⁹ Henceforth the name when employed by the orthodox was used only as a term of reproach and contempt

The history of the Unitarian movement in England properly began with Biddle, and we have followed the central stream of it, centering

³⁶ *Mr Firmin's religion* p 48

³⁷ *loc cit supra* Cf Wallace, *Antithesis* 1 253, citing Charles Leslie, *The Socinian Controversy discussed* (London, 1708-10), Part vi, preface, p 1

³⁷ Cf 'The Agreement of the Unitarians with the Catholic Church,' *Unitarian Tracts* vol III (1697), and 'The Grounds and Occasions of the Controversy concerning the Unity of God, etc,' *id op* (1698)

³⁸ Cf Stephen Nye, *The Explication of the Articles of the Divine Unity, the Trinity, and Incarnation*, etc (London, 1715)

³⁹ In particular, Biddle's followers rejected the Socinian idea of the invocation of Christ as a subordinate divine being, and that of the natural mortality of man, while they added the conception of the Holy Spirit as an angel, and the doctrine of the essential immortality of the soul

in the *Unitarian Tracts*, down to about the end of the seventeenth century; but there were also lateral currents and detached persons in the same period of whom some account needs to be given in order to make the tale complete. As has already been told, the reign of Charles II was marked by a succession of acts designed to oppress and weaken non-conformists; but under James II the persecution of them was no longer enforced, and there began to be talk about a policy of comprehension or else of toleration. By the former it was proposed to enlarge the conditions of membership in the Church by abolishing some objectionable features, or making them optional, so that all parties might heartily unite with the Church of England, and a Comprehension Bill was introduced into Parliament. But there was such determined opposition from many stiff conservatives among the clergy, and so cool an approval from the non-conformists, that though the House of Lords passed it, the Bill was put to sleep in the Commons, and nothing more was heard of it. There remained, however, the Act of Toleration, which passed both houses with little opposition in 1689, making it at last lawful for non-conformists to hold public worship. Catholics and deniers of the Trinity, however, were excluded from the toleration, and Unitarians were not granted full toleration until 1813.⁴⁰ A few months after this the King appointed a commission of Bishops and divines to prepare alterations found expedient in the liturgy, in which the greatest stumblingblock was offered by the Athanasian Creed; but in the Convocation there was so much dissension that nothing was accomplished, and the attempt to reform the liturgy came to nothing.⁴¹

It was shortly after the passage of the Toleration Act that the series of the *Unitarian Tracts* began, initiating one line of the controversy that we have briefly followed above. Contemporary with this, however, were several other more or less separate controversies in the same field, in which clergymen in the Church endeavored, in view of attacks upon its doctrines, to set forth a satisfactory statement of them in competition with one another or in answer to critics. The earliest of these grew out of the Rev. George Bull's *Defence of the Nicene Faith*,⁴²

⁴⁰ Cf. Neal, *Puritans*, v, 77-89; Birch, *Tillotson*, pp. 164-214.

⁴¹ Cf. Birch, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-208.

⁴² Cf. Georgius Bullius, *Defensio Fidei Nicaenae*, etc. (Oxonii, 1685); also in his *Works* (Oxford, 1846), vol. v; Eng. trans., *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology* (Oxford, 1851). Supplementary to this was his *Judicium Ecclesiae Catholicae*, etc. (Oxonii, 1694); also in his *Works*, vol. vi; Eng. trans. as above, 1855.

which had been written in 1680 as an answer to Sandius,⁴³ but not published until some years later. It had long been contended that the orthodox view of Christ was that held by the ante-Nicene Fathers, whereas Sandius, and the great Jesuit scholar Pétavius (Petavius)⁴⁴ had recently brought much evidence to show that that period was Arian. Bull now sought to demonstrate, in a work designed by its evidence of wide research to put an end to all dispute, that these Fathers were orthodox;⁴⁵ and he did this in a manner that showed supercilious contempt of his adversaries and heaped contumelies upon them. His work was highly praised, especially upon the Continent, by both Protestant and Catholic scholars, whose verdict was gladly accepted as final. Henceforth it was triumphantly appealed to as the unanswerable testimony of profound scholarship, by apologists of whom few are likely to have given themselves the pains to read critically its 800 pages of learned Latin, when a ready-made judgment was so easily to be had. It was thus ten years before any serious reply to it appeared in England. In 1695, however, in the third volume of the *Unitarian Tracts*, there appeared an extended anonymous tract entitled *The Judgment of the Fathers concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity, opposed to Dr. G. Bull's works* mentioned above, and it laid them under unsparring criticism.⁴⁶

At almost the same time with the above there appeared from the pen of the Rev. Gilbert Clerke (1641-97), a sometime Presbyterian minister of whom little else is known,⁴⁷ two other writings, seriously questioning Dr. Bull's positions, and the soundness of his scholarship. These were entitled *Ante-Nicenisimus, sive Testimonia Patrum . . . de Trinitate* (1694); and *Brevis Responsio ad Domini D. Georgii Bulli Defensionem Synodi Nicaenae* (1695); with which a third tract by an unknown writer, *Vera et Antiqua Fides de Divinitate Christi asserta, contra D. D. Bulli Judicium Ecclesiae*, in criticism of Dr. Bull's second

⁴³ Cf. Sandius, *Nucleus*, *ut supra*, p. 211.

⁴⁴ Cf. Dionysius Petavius, *De Theologicis Dogmatibus* (Parisius, 1644 ff.).

⁴⁵ Cf. Robert Nelson, *Life of Dr. George Bull* (London, 1713), p. 280 ff.; Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1878), I, 484-486; Wallace, *Antitrin*, I, 184-187; Patrick Fairbairn's Review appended to J. A. Dornier's *History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ* (Edinburgh, 1863), III, 340-350.

⁴⁶ Cf. Wallace, *Antitrin*, I, 331-339.

⁴⁷ Cf. Wallace, *Antitrin*, III, 362-371; Robert Nelson, *The Life of Dr. George Bull* in his *Works* (Oxford, 1846), pp. 420-437.

book, was bound up in one volume, with the title, *Tractatus Tres* (1695).⁴⁸ Closely connected with these three is a work by the Polish scholar, Samuel Crellius, recognized in his time as one of the most learned men in Europe, to whom, indeed, they have sometimes been ascribed; and who under a pseudonym published yet another work in criticism of those of Dr. Bull.⁴⁹ But none of these criticisms, however just, could now catch up in the minds of the faithful with the firmly established reputation of the 'incredibly learned Bishop Bull,' for he had now been created Archdeacon of Llandaff and honored with the Doctor's degree, and was well on his way to be Bishop of St. David's. Nevertheless, half a generation later, in connection with another controversy, Dr. Daniel Whitby, a very learned divine in the Church, published a searching examination of his work, exposing its many errors and undermining its foundations, though it did not lessen his prestige in the Church.⁵⁰

Mention of Crellius makes it natural at this point to refer to Sir Isaac Newton, who showed him singular kindness, and who, if not directly active in the movement whose history we are following, was in his thinking closely allied to it. The great scientist during the last thirty years of his life devoted much of his leisure time to studies in theology and ecclesiastical history, in which he became astonishingly well-read, and at his death in 1727 he left among his papers an important *Historical Account of Two Corruptions of Scripture*, which had been written already in 1690, and was to have been published at that time, when the doctrine of the Trinity was being actively debated, though for some reason it was withheld to be published posthumously, and hence did not see the light, even in an imperfect form, until 1754.⁵¹ This work presents an elaborate critical study of the original reading of the two main proof-texts for the doctrine of the Trinity (I. John v. 7, and I. Tim. iii. 16), and arrives at the conclusion that they are demonstrably corrupt and ought no longer to be relied upon. Critical investigation of Newton's

⁴⁸ Cf. Bock, *Bibliotheca*, i, 172-175; Wallace, *Antitit.*, iii, 484-486.

⁴⁹ (Lucas Mellierus — anagram for Samuel Crellius), *Fides Primorum Christianorum, ex Barnaba, Herma, et Clemente Romano monstrata, Defensioni Fidei Nicaenae D. Georgii Bulli opposita* (Londini, 1697).

⁵⁰ Cf. his *Disquisitiones Modestae in Clarissimi Bulli Defensionem Fidei Nicaenae* (Londini, 1718). See also Whitby's reply to Dr. Waterland's objections (in two parts) (London, 1720, 1721). Cf. Sparks, *Collection of Essays*, ii, 19-21.

⁵¹ Cf. the exact reprint (London, 1830), taken from Horsley's edition of Newton's Works (London, 1785), vol. v; also in Sparks, *op. cit.*, ii, 235-320.

manuscript remains by a recent biographer has definitely proved that his doctrinal views were wholly unitarian in the modern sense of the word.⁵²

Perhaps the sharpest and most noted of the theological controversies at this period is that which broke out at Oxford in 1690, raged some five years, was conducted by eminent divines, and ended in a University decree forbidding further discussion. At a time when the doctrine of the Trinity was receiving much attention, in consequence of criticisms of the Athanasian Creed in some of the early *Unitarian Tracts*, the latitudinarian Dr. Arthur Bury, Rector of Exeter College,⁵³ Oxford, published in 1690 a small book entitled *The Naked Gospel*, in which he sought to forestall controversy on the disputed doctrines by bringing the Christian religion back to its original simplicity. Christians, he held, have confused themselves by endless disputes about speculative questions, which are fruitless and irrelevant; for the Gospel is all summed up in two words, believe and repent. Violent controversy was stirred up over the book, and the personal character of the Rector and the administration of the College were drawn into it; the result of all which was that Dr. Bury was removed from his office, and excommunicated from the Church, his book was condemned as heretical and was ordered burned in the quadrangle of the College, and he himself was fined £500.⁵⁴

While the above case was still pending, another Oxford divine offered a solution of the vexed problem. The venerable John Wallis, Professor of Geometry, who professed to have reflected on the subject for more than forty years, a celebrated mathematician who was one of the founders of modern Algebra, published a pamphlet entitled, *The Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity briefly explained in a letter to a friend* (London, 1690). His explanation was that there are in the Divine Being three distinctions, known to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which we call Persons, each of which is God; but if the word Persons does not please, then let us call them three Somewhats. There is no inconsistency in saying that what in one respect are three may in another

⁵² Cf. Sparks, *op. cit.*; Wallace, *Antitrin.*, iii, 428-468; McLachlan, *Religious Views*, p. 200; Louis T. More, *Life of Sir Isaac Newton* (New York, 1934).

⁵³ Writers have often mistakenly called him Master of Lincoln College.

⁵⁴ Cf. Hunt, *Religious Thought*, ii, 194-201; Wallace, *Antitrin.*, i, 200-207, 279 f. The ensuing controversy ran to fifteen or more separate items.

respect be One. To make the matter clear he takes from Geometry the familiar example of a cube, which he has used for many years. To believe in one God in three equal Persons is as reasonable as to believe in one cube with three equal dimensions. Just as simple as that. But his critics were not so easily convinced. From both within the Church and outside it they expressed their dissatisfaction with his explanations. The discussion ensuing ran for fourteen months, with eight successive letters from Wallis and as many replies from critics, who drove him to the very edge of heresy as a Sabellian.

It was not long, however, before attention was diverted to another quarter and a warmer controversy. Dr. William Sherlock, Master of the Temple, a clergyman of outstanding gifts, had been deeply stirred by the recent criticisms of the Trinity and other doctrines of the Church, especially by the Unitarian *Brief Notes on the Creed of St. Athanasius*, and Nye's *Brief History of the Unitarians*.⁵⁵ Having recently been suspended from his preferments in the Church for refusing to swear allegiance to the new government, he now saw an opportunity to regain his standing in the Church by taking a bold stand as champion of the true faith. He therefore confidently stepped forth in 1690 with *A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity*, etc. (published with his Bishop's *imprimatur*), in answer to the two tracts just named.⁵⁶ Of all the orthodox writings of the period this one made the greatest noise and called forth the severest criticisms. Much stress had of late been laid upon reason in religion in contrast with mere faith, and apologists for Christianity were concerned to show that its doctrines were not unreasonable. In this work, therefore, Sherlock aimed to vindicate the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation from the alleged absurdities and contradictions that were charged upon them; and he felt sure that he had given 'a very easy and intelligible notion of a Trinity in Unity.' He held that there are in the Divine Being three intelligent infinite beings or persons, as really distinct as Peter, James and John, each of them self-conscious, and infinite in wisdom, goodness and power, and all united by mutual self-consciousness in one God; and that, in contrast to this, 'Socinianism, for all its pretenses to Reason, is one of the most stupid, senseless heresies that ever infested the Christian Church'; whereas 'this very plain and intelligible account of this great

⁵⁵ *v. supra*, p. 219.

⁵⁶ Cf. Wallace, *Antitrin.*, i, 214-224a, 236-238.

and venerable mystery is as plain and intelligible as the notion of One God, or of One Person in the Godhead'

Sherlock's book was at first enthusiastically welcomed by the leading divines in London and in both Universities; for he was thought to have dealt the Unitarians a crushing blow. His forfeited offices and emoluments were restored to him, and he was not long afterwards made Dean of St Paul's. The chorus of praise, however, was not universal. His offensive self assurance and his contemptuous references to his opponents invited criticism, he was personally disliked by many of the clergy for his haughtiness, and not only the Unitarians but several other writers mercilessly picked his arguments to pieces. His critic in the *Unitarian Tracts* had opened many eyes to his virtual tritheism, and for a time attacks on the Socinians ceased. He was urged for the sake of peace in the Church to make no reply, and to let the controversy silently die out, but he, thinking that he had won the day, kept it alive by a second publication,⁵⁷ until at length in 1693 there came from the press a spiteful work from a clergyman in the Church who was famous both as a great preacher and as a brilliant wit, and who heartily disliked Sherlock on personal grounds, and eagerly embraced the chance to humiliate him. This work, though published anonymously,⁵⁸ was in fact by Dr Robert South, and in it, with a continuous flow of stinging satire, he poured ridicule upon Sherlock's explanation of the Trinity, ruthlessly exposed his errors, self contradictions and inconsistencies, and charged his view with being no better than bare tritheism.⁵⁹ But when he came to the constructive part of his discussion he fell into the opposite extreme, and after long citation of authorities, he concluded that 'the three Persons of the Trinity are one and the same undivided Essence or Godhead, diversified only by three distinct modes of subsistence, sometimes called properties, or relations'. Of course this explanation could not long escape criticism in turn, and Stephen Nye in an anonymous *Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the*

⁵⁷ *An Apology for writing against Socinianism*, etc (London, 1693)

⁵⁸ *Animadversions upon Dr Sherlock's book entitled A Vindication of the Holy and Ever Blessed Trinity*, etc (London, 1693)

⁵⁹ The German theologian Abraham Calovius in his *Dissertationes Theologicae Rostochienses* etc (Rostochii, 1637) p. 6, says of South that "in a subject that requires the greatest sobriety of style he has vented his fury in a way so boisterous that if a system of scurrility were to be compiled, I know not where the materials are to be so plentifully found as in his writings"

*Trinity*⁶⁰ showed with masterly skill that Dr. South, in avoiding the Scylla of Dr. Sherlock's tritheism, had quite fallen into the Charybdis of Sabellianism. A heated and many-sided controversy now followed through several years, in which parts were taken by both churchmen and Dissenters, conservatives and liberals, Christians and Free-thinkers. The Unitarian contributions are found in the second and third collections of *Unitarian Tracts*. It would add little to the development of our general theme, and nothing but weariness to the reader, to follow in detail the steps of a controversy that in its day absorbed such wide and close attention, but is to-day so outworn, and even in its own time began to grow wearisome.⁶¹ We touch upon only the outstanding points.

Archbishop Tillotson, who in one of his sermons had spoken in generous appreciation of Socinians,⁶² without at all approving their doctrines, was early drawn obliquely into the question, and had to republish his sermons in order to dispel the suspicion that he himself was a Socinian unconfessed; and in writing to Bishop Burnet of the Athanasian Creed he impatiently confessed, 'I wish we were well rid of it.'⁶³ Dr. John Howe, prominent Puritan divine, wrote several pieces, witnessing to the interest in the question among Dissenters. The Unitarians were alert to criticize every vulnerable point. Sherlock published another book defending his position,⁶⁴ and South repeated more flatly his charge of tritheism; while the very learned Professor Joseph Bingham in a sermon at Oxford defended the now sharply criticized view

⁶⁰ In the final number of *Unitarian Tracts*, vol. iv (1693).

⁶¹ The items of most importance, after the originals by Sherlock and South, are the following: (Edward Wottonhall) *An Earnest and Compassionate Suit for Forbearance* (1692), Sherlock, *An Apology for Writing against Socinianism in Defence of the Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation* (1693); (Howe) *A Calm and Sober Enquiry concerning the Possibility of a Trinity in the Godhead* (1695); (Sherlock) *A Defence of Dr. Sherlock's Notion of a Trinity in Unity* (1694), (South) *Tritheism Charged upon Dr. Sherlock's New Notion of the Trinity* (1695); (anon.) *Reflexions on the Good Temper, and Fair Dealing, of the Annadvertiser upon Dr. Sherlock's Vindication* (1695); Bingham, *Sermon on the Trinity* (1695), Sherlock, *Modest Examination of the Authorities and Reasons of the late Decree* (1696); Sherlock, *The Distinction between Real and Nominal Trinitarians Examined* (1696). For a sufficiently full account of the whole controversy, see Wallace, *Antithesis*, I, 199-358; Mr. Firmin's *Religion*, pp. 52-83; Hunt, *Religious Thought*, II, 194-222; Sherlock, *The Present State of the Socinian Controversy* (1698); John Stoughton, *History of Religion in England* (London, 1881), v, 157-165.

⁶² Cf. his *Works* (London, 1820), III, 310 f.

⁶³ Cf. Birch's *Tillotson*, pp. 442-444, 343.

⁶⁴ *A Modest Examination . . . of the late Decree, etc.* (London, 1695); answered by (Jonathan Edwards), *Remarks upon . . . A Modest Examination, etc.* (Oxford, 1696).

of Sherlock so positively that Dr. South's party became alarmed, and procured from a meeting of heads of colleges at Oxford in 1695 a decree censuring this doctrine as false, impious and heretical, and forbidding all members of the University to affirm any such doctrine by preaching or otherwise.⁶⁵ Upon this, those that had sympathized with Dr. Sherlock fell away from him in great numbers, leaving him almost alone; while his now triumphant adversaries heaped upon him the crowning insult by publishing Aretius's *Short History of Valentinus Gentilis the Tritheist*⁶⁶ . . . put to death . . . at Bern in Switzerland (London, 1696), 'now translated into English for the use of Dr. Sherlock' and 'tendered to the consideration of the Archbishops and Bishops' as presumably a modest intimation of their duty at the present time. Despite the Oxford decree, and an ironic tract from the Socinian side by a humble clock-maker identified by the name of John Smith,⁶⁷ discussion continued and was carried on in bitter spirit on both sides. Hence the King, weary of the long quarrel, at length intervened in the interest of religious peace, and directed the Archbishops and Bishops, for the sake of unity in the Church, to order that no preacher henceforth should presume to deliver any other doctrine concerning the Trinity than what is contained in Scripture, the three Creeds, and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion; and that they should carefully avoid any new terms or unusual explanations of the doctrine.⁶⁸

Nothing further was heard in defence of tritheism. Dr. Sherlock, it is true, continued to write, but now in milder tone and with greater caution, qualifying or correcting some of his statements or terms, and in his last contribution,⁶⁹ he reviews the whole subject at considerable length and, without formally retracting anything, in effect expresses himself *against* the heresy of 'three infinite, eternal minds, spirits, beings or substances,' which he had so boldly put forth, thus showing that since the Oxford Decree and the refutation by the Unitarians, he had entirely reversed his position. Thus ended the famous Trinitarian Con-

⁶⁵ Cf. Wallace, *Antitrin.*, i. 329-331; Mr. Firmin's *Religion*, pp. 54-56 v. *supra*, p. 216 n.

⁶⁶ Cf. vol. i of the present work; p. 237 f.

⁶⁷ *A Designed End to the Socinian Controversy* (London, 1695); for which, as heretical, the author was called to account before the ecclesiastical court, and required to recant the heresies therein contained. Cf. Wallace, *Antitrin.*, i, 289-298.

⁶⁸ Cf. Wallace, *Antitrin.*, i, 344 f.

⁶⁹ *The Present State of the Socinian Controversy*, etc. (London, 1698). Cf. Mr. Firmin's *Religion*, pp. 68-83.

troversy which, though it was largely an internal matter in the Church, had relations that make it a part of the history of Unitarianism, for in it the clergy who felt ill at ease with the professed doctrines and liturgy of the Church were striving to secure some change in the received doctrines, or some new explication of them, which they could with good conscience accept. In this aim they felt that they had measurably succeeded, for they concluded that in the course of the controversy they had won their main point; and though they did not like the terms of the Creed, yet in the circumstances they were content to stay as they were rather than go out of the Church; and it was well past the middle of the next century before another generation of the clergy began in their consciences to feel oppressed by the required formularies of worship. In the meantime Socinian opinions were on the whole much more widely prevalent in the Church than in Dissent; and although they were well known to be held, yet no one suffered discipline for them, or had anything to fear so long as he refrained from openly proclaiming unauthorized doctrines.

Though the Trinitarian Controversy held the centre of the stage in the last decade of the seventeenth century, yet independently of it there were outbreaks in other quarters. Thus early in 1693 one William Freeke (1662-1744), who had studied at Oxford and had read some Arian books and imbibed their teachings, and who called himself a Unitarian, published a little anti-trinitarian tract of eight pages⁷⁰ and sent it to members of both Houses of Parliament, who manifested their disapproval by voting it an infamous and scandalous libel, and ordering it burnt by the common hangman. The author also was ordered to be prosecuted, was fined £500, and was required to make a public recantation.

Yet more conspicuous was the tragic case of young Thomas Aikenhead,⁷¹ a youth of eighteen or twenty and a medical student at the University of Edinburgh, who under a long-ignored Scottish law was tried for blasphemy and for denying the Trinity. He had been given some shallow infidel writings to read, and carried away by transient

⁷⁰ *A Brief but Clear Confutation of the Doctrine of the Trinity.*

⁷¹ Cf. Wallace, *Antitrin.*, i, 377-384; Hugo Arnot, *Collection and Abridgments of Celebrated Criminal Trials in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1785), pp. 322-327; Thomas Bayly Howell, *Complete Collection of State Trials*, etc. (London, 1809-28), xiii, 918-939; *Monthly Repository*, viii (1813), 17, 108, 178-180; John Gordon, *Thomas Aikenhead* (London, 1856).

agreement with them he let fall in the hearing of fellow-students some unguarded expressions which were reported and led to his arrest. His trial was marked by narrow bigotry, and was a travesty of both Christianity and justice. He was allowed no counsel. His admission of the charges made, his avowal of deep and sincere repentance, and his plea for mercy were all disregarded, and he was hanged in 1697. It was the last execution for heresy in Great Britain.

Contemporary with the developments that we have been following within the Church, but largely separate from them, was another, of lay origin, which though not directly related to the Unitarian movement yet powerfully contributed toward it as a movement for broad religious freedom. This was the advocacy of toleration so prominently urged by the philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), who has been well called the father of English Rationalism, and 'the intellectual symbol of the period of the (English) Revolution.' He was of Puritan ancestry, and educated at Oxford, where he became deeply interested in philosophy and later in religion, under the influence of the latitudinarians. After middle life, being at odds with the ruling powers in England, he made his home for five years in Holland, where he formed an intimate friendship with the Remonstrant professors Limborch and Le Clerc who, though not Socinians, had been much influenced by the Socinian spirit. At the end of this period he published a *Letter on Toleration* which makes a landmark in the history of religious liberty; and in 1690 appeared his famous *Essay concerning Human Understanding* which marked an epoch in the history of English philosophy, wherein he was a dominating figure for at least a century. But although these writings were not without influence upon the development of religious thought, it was Locke's (anonymous) *Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in Scriptures* (1695) that gave especial stimulus to our movement. Locke had of late given earnest attention to Christian doctrine, and taking his stand on the conviction that there could be nothing in revelation incompatible with reason, he sought in this work to show that Jesus and his Apostles demanded of their followers nothing more than faith in him as the Messiah; and that there was no warrant for insisting upon acceptance of other doctrines. Foreign scholars greeted the work with enthusiastic praise, but orthodox writers in England at once assailed it furiously. Dr. John Edwards, a clergyman of the Church of England, and son of the Presbyterian author of the

sensational *Gangraena* of the previous generation, was the first of these, and in a scurrilous attack⁷² far outdoing the language of his father, he charged the book with being one of the causes of atheism. He was competently answered by an anonymous writer in the third volume of the *Unitarian Tracts*;⁷³ and Locke himself replied in two restrained vindications. In the next two years Edwards followed up his attack in two more works, in which he charged his opponent outright with being a Socinian in disguise, and the Socinian doctrines themselves as tending to irreligion and atheism.⁷⁴

Locke's work found a doughty advocate, and Edwards's works received due criticism, in several publications by the Rev. Samuel Bold, rector of a church at Steeple, Dorset, who had himself suffered persecution for his pulpit utterances. He was unknown to Locke, and though more orthodox than he in belief, he came forward in broad-minded vindication of Locke's book, pronouncing it one of the best books that have been published for at least these sixteen hundred years.⁷⁵ Interchange of controversial writings at length died out with two or three exchanges between Locke and Dr. Edward Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, over the doctrine of the Trinity (1697-98).⁷⁶

⁷² Cf. John Edwards, *Some thoughts concerning the several Causes and Occasions of Atheism . . . with some brief reflections on . . . The Reasonableness of Christianity* (London, 1695). See also a far more temperate criticism in (Anon.) *Animadversions on . . . The Reasonableness of Christianity* (Oxford, 1697).

⁷³ Cf. *The Exceptions of Mr. Edwards in his Causes of Atheism, etc., examined* (London, 1695).

⁷⁴ Cf. Wallace, *Antitrim.*, i, 308-322; John Edwards, *Socinianism Unmask'd* (London, 1696); *id.*, *The Socinian Creed* (London, 1697).

⁷⁵ Cf. Wallace, *Antitrim.*, i, 314 f., 321-323; Bold, *A Short Discourse of the True Knowledge of Christ Jesus* (London, 1697); *id.*, *Some Passages in the Reasonableness of Christianity* (1697); *id.*, *A Reply to Mr. Edwards's Brief Reflections* (1697); *id.*, *Observations on the Animadversions . . . on The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1698); *id.*, *Some Considerations on . . . Locke's Essay of Humane Understanding* (1699); all republished together in his *Collection of Tracts* (London, 1706).

⁷⁶ This is perhaps the place to record an isolated but very interesting trace of an effort to widen the extent of Unitarian influence even before the publishing of the *Unitarian Tracts*. In 1682 some persons describing themselves only as "two single philosophers," but writing as though representing the Unitarians, addressed the Ambassador of the Emperor of Morocco to Charles II, upon his departure from the country. The writers emphasize the fact that Unitarians alone among Christians hold to the unity of God, and thus in religious sympathy are closest to the Mohammedans. They therefore hand the Ambassador some little Unitarian books to be presented to his countrymen as a specimen of the thought of Unitarians in England. They add a brief statement of the points wherein the Unitarians agree with the Mohammedans, of the origin and history

The influence of Locke long outlasted that of his opponents, and constantly told in the direction of broader tolerance, greater simplicity of doctrine, and fuller reliance upon reason as a test of truth; but the doctrine of the Trinity ceased to be the subject of perpetual debate. Men might accommodate themselves to it under one of the various modified interpretations which controversy had apparently made acceptable, or they might abandon it altogether, but further disputation about it was no longer in order. In fact, nothing remained to be said on the subject. The number of writings contributed to it in the last twenty years of the century was extraordinary, though only the outstanding ones have been noticed here; while the remainder, though exploring every angle of the subject, and addressed to a various public, added little of importance to what others had written. Moreover Firmin, who had been sponsor of most of the Unitarian contributions, had died in 1697; his leading writers had found conditions in the Church at length more tolerable; the rationalistic tendencies springing from Locke's philosophy were creating a new atmosphere; and most of all, symptoms of Deism charged to him were beginning to appear and to attract alarmed attention as a more serious danger than Socinianism or Unitarianism. The last echo of the long controversy was heard in 1697, when one John Gailhard, Gent., published in London *The Blasphemous Socinian Heresie Disproved and Confuted*, with a concluding chapter casting an apprehensive glance toward the Deism in Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious* (1696). His book, dedicated to both Houses of Parliament, insistently urged that all the rigors of the law be now enforced against those that embraced and furthered Socinian doctrines. The Dissenters also, in an address to the King in 1697, had urged him to prohibit Uni-

of Unitarianism, and of points in Mohammedanism that need correcting. Whether this letter ever reached its destination is not recorded; but some years later the controversialist the Rev. Charles Connor succeeded in obtaining a copy of it, and seeing a tactical advantage in doing so he prefixed it to two letters on the Socinian controversy (dated 1694 and 1697), by way of proving that the English Unitarians were not Christians, but nearly the same as Mohammedans. This publication created a considerable sensation at the time, which was much taken advantage of by the orthodox, but it was soon lost among graver issues. The whole is found as an introduction to Charles Leslie, *The Socinian Controversy Discuss'd* (London, 1708). Also reprinted in America, 'Letter to a Mahometan Ambassador,' in *The Panoplist* (Boston), xi (1815), 72-78. The original Ms is in the Archbishopal Library at Lambeth, Codd. Mss. Tensoniani, No. 673. Cf. Alexander Gordon, 'The Primary Document of English Unitarianism,' *Christian Life*, xviii (1892), 464 f, 476 f, 523 f.

tarian publications, but he refused, and Gailhard's book had no immediate result. It was at once followed by the very sarcastic *Apology for the Parliament, humbly representing to Mr. John Gailhard some reasons why they did not at his request enact Sanguinary Laws against Protestants in their last session* (London, 1697).⁷⁷ However, the next session, in 1698, passed 'An Act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness.' It provided that any professed Christian convicted of denying the Trinity, or the truth of the Christian Religion, or the divine authority of the Scriptures, should be debarred from holding any public office, and upon the second conviction should be forever deprived of civil rights and be imprisoned three years. The King, yielding to strong pressure, reluctantly gave it his sanction,⁷⁸ but fortunately very few attempts were ever made to enforce this act, though it stood on the statute books until 1813.

The Trinitarian Controversy in its various phases continued about ten years, and was largely carried on within the Church. It was very soon followed by the Arian Controversy, over a closely related doctrine, that of the person of Christ, and was largely carried on in the dissenting churches. It will furnish the theme of our next two chapters.

⁷⁷ In *Unitarian Tracts*, vol. iv. Anonymous, but the joint production of two clergymen, William Stephens, Oxon., and Henry Day, Cantab.

⁷⁸ Cf. Josiah Toulmin, *Historical View of the State of the Protestant Dissenters in England* (London, 1814), pp. 120-133; Lindsey, *Historical View*, pp. 302, 319.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ARIAN MOVEMENT IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

THE TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSY, which kept the established Church in more or less serious turmoil for something like ten years, may be said to have pretty well subsided by 1697. Henceforth most consciences that had felt troubled about employing the formularies of the Church in their ordinary sense were content with being practically allowed to take them, without misgiving, in a Sabellian sense. This controversy had been almost wholly confined to members of the established Church, and only one or two among the Dissenters had made any contribution to it. But peace was of short duration. The eighteenth century was still young when another doctrinal controversy arose in the Church, which was to disturb its peace for fifteen or twenty years more, and for a time threatened to bring about changes in the liturgy that would have made a Unitarian movement well-nigh superfluous. This was the so-called Arian movement in the Church; and while in the end it died away with no definite doctrinal reform achieved in the Church itself, it took firm root among the Dissenters and led the way, as will be seen in the next chapter, to definite steps in the direction of modern Unitarianism.

It will be recalled that the former of these controversies grew out of an attempt to render the doctrine of the Trinity more intelligible and simple, and it ended as we have seen. The Arian movement, on the other hand, grew out of an attempt to revise the doctrine of the person of Christ as stated in the Athanasian Creed so as to make it more in accord with Scripture, and the movement thus started at length ended, as we shall see, in a purely Unitarian view of Christ. While the former controversy centered about the University of Oxford, the latter was largely related to Cambridge. It may also be noted that as in the first half of the seventeenth century ways of thinking in religion which a generation later became factors in the Trinitarian Controversy were promoted by the Latitudinarians at Oxford, so in the second half of the century the way for the Arian controversy was in some measure

prepared by the Cambridge Platonists.¹ Among a larger number included under this name, the leading spirits were Benjamin Whichcote, Ralph Cudworth, and Henry More, all three scholars teaching at Cambridge; and as the heads of the latitudinarian movement at Oxford came from the High Church and Royalist side of their period, so these Cambridge divines sprang from the Puritan side. Through their thinking they exercised great influence on the thought of their time. Stimulated by their study of Plato they broke away from stagnant scholasticism, opposed bigotry and dogmatism, insisted upon but few essential doctrines, and thus by their breadth of view and their generous sympathies they softened and broadened Puritanism. They held that religion can not be separated from reason, nor morals from piety; that minor doctrinal differences are unimportant, and that religious fellowship is to be based not on detailed agreement in doctrine, but on common sympathy and tolerant charity. It is not difficult to see that we have here conditions that in due time will be highly favorable to the development of religious liberalism; and it is against such a background that the Arian movement arose and developed.

The first in the Church of England to make open avowal of Arianism was William Whiston,² and his published view was the first frank expression in the Church of a doctrine about Christ differing from the Athanasian Creed. Whiston was a clergyman, born in 1667 and educated at Cambridge, where he studied mathematics and obtained a fellowship. He took orders, but in 1703 he became Sir Isaac Newton's successor as professor of mathematics. He was a man of great learning, and published several scores of works, about evenly divided in subject between science and theology. He was sincere and outspoken to the last degree, never once counting the cost to himself; but he was also strangely credulous, ready, as Macaulay said of him, to believe everything but the Trinity, and his head was full of eccentric notions. Following a suggestion on the subject made by his friend Samuel Clarke, he made a careful examination of the writers of the first two Christian centuries, which convinced him that the primitive Christian belief was not Athanasian but Arian or, as he called it, 'Eusebian'; and that it was his duty to try to restore it in the Church. It thus became the great

¹ Cf. Tulloch, *Rational Theology*, vol. ii; Hunt, *Religious Thought*, i, 410-438.

² Cf. his *Memoirs of his Life and Writings* (London, 1749); and the *Historical Preface*, prefixed to his *Primitive Christianity Revived*, vol. i (London, 1711).

passion of his life to bring the faith and usages of the Church back to their simple, original state; and to this end he preached Arianism in his sermons, omitted the Nicene parts of the liturgy, and about 1708 earnestly addressed the Archbishops, begging them to lay aside the use of the Athanasian Creed as corrupt and unchristian; though to this appeal he received no answer. His heresies presently became so notorious that his Bishop suspended him; while the University, not wishing to repeat Oxford's recent unhappy experience with heresy, deprived him of his chair in 1710 and banished him from the University. His Rector refused him the communion, and the Convocation of the Church also was ready to adopt a censure of his views as impious and heretical, though on technical grounds the measure failed.

Nevertheless he continued to advocate his views, attempted to start a new movement conformed to the standards of what he regarded as 'primitive Christianity,' revised the prayer-book accordingly, and in vindication of his convictions published in four volumes a learned work on *Primitive Christianity Revived*. Hoping to bring about a reform in the worship of the Church, he organized a Society for Promoting Primitive Christianity, in which a dozen or so met at his home for a year or two; but though at first he won a little following of sympathizers, they soon fell away and his project made no progress. Late in life he ceased to attend the established worship, and joined the General Baptists, whom he 'took to be the best Christians, both in doctrine and practice, of any he had yet met with.'³ He died in 1752, and is scarcely remembered to-day for any of his writings except his translation of the works of Josephus. Whiston's heresies were in brief these: God the Father is the supreme deity, and the only object of supreme worship; but Jesus Christ is also truly God, by appointment of the Father, to whom he is not equal but subordinate; who existed before all creation, and was the Father's first-begotten Son. Whiston had few followers, but the Arian beliefs that he so boldly proclaimed indirectly influenced many. Not under his acknowledged leadership, however; for with his virtual exclusion from the Church his influence with its members practically ceased. His futile effort to have the worship of the Church restored to what he regarded as its simpler primitive form was based upon his study of the development of the Christian *tradition*. His friend and contemporary Samuel Clarke, on the other hand, paid only incidental re-

³ Cf. his *Memoirs*, part ii, p. 461.

gard to the testimony of Christian literature as to what the early Christian beliefs and usages were, but sought to bring the Church's doctrines and worship back to conformity with the teaching of *Scripture*, from which he felt that it had departed. Yet though he had great influence with a very respectable minority in the Church, still in the end he succeeded no better than Whiston in his effort to reform the ritual of the Church; and his main influence survived among the liberal Dissenters in what has come to be known (however incorrectly) as the Arian movement.⁴

Samuel Clarke (1675-1729) was a native of Norwich, and took his University degrees at Cambridge, where he was distinguished as a student. He took orders in the Church, and in 1698 became chaplain to the Bishop of Norwich, and held this office for twelve years. In 1704-05 he sprang into fame with his Boyle Lectures⁵ on the Being and Attributes of God, in which he presented the a priori argument for religion so forcibly that it was an accepted classic for two or three generations. He came to be regarded as the greatest English theologian of his time, and was long spoken of as 'the great Dr. Clarke,'⁶ and it was taken for granted that he would in due time be Archbishop of Canterbury. One fervent admirer wrote of him after his death, 'it may truly be said of him that he was the greatest man that ever was born into the world.' Although he had been deeply influenced by Locke's philosophy and by Newton's science, Clarke had not been known to be unsound in doctrine, and he had been made Rector of the important parish of St. James's Westminster (1709), as well as chaplain to Queen Anne. But Clarke was evidently not at peace with himself. Some years previously he had intimated to Whiston his conviction that the Athanasian Creed was not the primitive doctrine of the Church but a later invention; and now in 1709, when he was to stand for the Doctor's degree at Cambridge, which involved his resubscribing the Articles, Whiston

⁴ Whiston might fairly enough be called an Arian, though he preferred instead the designation Eusebian, but Clarke differed from Arius in some vital points so widely that he refused to own the name in any sense. Heretics, however, have seldom been able to fix the name by which they are to be called, and it has more often fallen to their orthodox opponents to fasten upon them a name identifying them with some ancient heresy to which they seemed akin, thus illustrating the remark that "all labels are libels."

⁵ Robert Boyle, famous scientist and devout Christian, provided by his will (1691) for a lecturer to preach each year eight sermon-lectures on the evidences of Christianity. This was the precursor of other similar lectureships.

⁶ Cf. *Observations on Mr. Whiston's Historical Memoirs* (London, 1747), p. 70.

tried to persuade him not to take the degree, or at least openly to declare in what sense he subscribed the Articles, and so preserve a clear conscience.⁷ Clarke subscribed nevertheless, though with an uneasy mind; for he determined to examine the doctrine further, and then to publish in what sense he took the Articles and the forms of worship. Meantime Whiston so frequently and strongly urged him to declare his views openly, reproaching him for his evident timidity as being insincere, that their old friendship was somewhat chilled.

The outcome was that Clarke, after making an exhaustive study of the New Testament teaching, and in face of dissuasions for fear of arousing dissensions in the Church, in 1712 published his conclusions in a book that he entitled *The Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity*. In this work he took no fewer than 1251 relevant passages that he had culled from the New Testament, classified them by subject and added any necessary explanations of them, and then drew out of them fifty-five doctrinal statements which he considered represented the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity. Finally by comparison of passages he sought to show how far the English liturgy agreed and where it seemed to differ from the scripture doctrine. Stated in few words, the doctrine at which he arrived was this: that the Father alone is the supreme God, to whom alone supreme worship is to be paid; that Christ, though existing from eternity, is a subordinate being, who may be worshipped only in a lower sense as Mediator; and that the Holy Spirit also is a subordinate being, for worshipping whom there is no clear warrant. When these three are mentioned together, they constitute the Trinity. This is what Clarke considered the Scripture-doctrine of the Trinity, though the conservatives presently regarded it as sheer Arianism.

It was more than a year before any important reply to this work was made. Meanwhile it not only made a wide impression in England, where the required use of the Athanasian Creed kept the subject constantly in mind, but also was translated into German, and was long influential in Germany and Holland. Clarke had insisted that his views were not inconsistent with the formularies and liturgy of the Church as he understood them, and had said flatly in his introduction⁸

⁷ Cf. Whiston, *Historical Memoirs of the Life of Dr Samuel Clarke* (London, 1730), p. 12.

⁸ So great a clamor presently arose against this passage that in the second edition (1719) it was omitted.

that in this matter 'every person may reasonably agree to such forms whenever he can, in any sense at all, reconcile them with Scripture.' So many, who had formerly hesitated, were now inclined to adopt this easy-going policy, that the orthodox were aroused to protest. Half a score of attacks upon the work were made within two or three years, and several replies in defence appeared from Clarke's friends,⁹ though as the whole discussion lay between members of the Church, it is not to the purpose to relate it here.

Alarm at the spread of Clarke's views became so serious that in 1714 a complaint against his book was presented to the Lower House of Convocation on the ground of the heresies it contained; and the Upper House requested a copy of the particulars, which was furnished. Dr. Clarke apparently became apprehensive, and presented to the Upper House a very adroitly worded paper, expressing the opinion that the Son was eternally begotten of the Father, promising not to preach any more upon the subject in question, and stating that he did not intend to write any more concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, declaring that the Athanasian Creed and sections of the Litany had never been omitted in his church as charged, and hoping that in future his behavior would give no cause for complaint. Although he had retracted nothing, yet his enemies were pleased to construe this as a retractation, and the Upper House decided to proceed no further in the case. The Lower House, however, went on record as dissatisfied with the outcome.¹⁰ Although the charge of Arianism was distinctly refuted by Dr. Clarke, it was, and is, obvious that he no longer believed in the deity of Christ as defined by the Church. His influence considerably declined from this point on, and he was dismissed from his office as one of the Queen's chaplains. What he had written, however, and the example he had set, remained. He himself, indeed, became conscious of holding an equivocal position, so that he declined any further preferment requiring subscription; but within his own sphere he tried to realize some of his

⁹ The main attacks (all but one by clergymen) were by Edward Wells, Robert Nelson, James Knight, Bp. Francis Gastrell of Chester, John Edwards, Edward Welchman, Bp. John Potter of Oxford, Thomas Bennet, Richard Mayo, and above all Dr. Daniel Waterland. Defences by Daniel Whitby, Arthur Ashley Sykes, John Jackson, and several anonymous writers. Cf. William Van Mildert, *Life of Daniel Waterland*, pp. 36-43, prefixed to Waterland's *Works*, vol. i (Oxford, 1856); Abbey and Overton, *English Church*, i, 494-503.

¹⁰ Cf. all the documents of the proceedings in *An Apology for Dr. Clarke* (anon., but by John Lawrence), London, 1714.

hopes, as when he would have substituted new doxologies for the old ones, only to be forbidden by his Bishop. He also planned, as Whiston had already done, a reformed liturgy, purged of Athanasianism; and a half-century later the first Unitarian chapel in England, at Essex Hall, London, adopted a great part of his revisions in its Prayer Book, which were again transplanted to America in 1785 in the Prayer Book of King's Chapel, Boston.

His greatest legacy, however, was in what became notorious as 'Arian Subscription,' which although it was a matter wholly within the Church of England, yet casts a side-light on the course of the history we are following. Even before the publication of Dr. Clarke's book it had already been an occasional practice for clergymen that did not accept the Athanasian doctrine to subscribe the Articles nevertheless *pro forma*, or in some sophistical sense, and the practice had increased since Dr. Clarke seemed to justify it. Dr. Daniel Waterland of Cambridge, therefore, who in answer to Clarke had already written a very thorough and able defence of the divinity of Christ,¹¹ feeling deep concern at the increasing laxity with which many were subscribing to what they did not honestly believe, was moved to publish a vigorous tract against the practice.¹² He opposed the weaknesses and inconsistencies in Clarke's position, and in opposition to Clarke's contention that one may subscribe to whatever he can in any sense reconcile to Scripture as he understands it, he maintained¹³ that the Church expects the subscriber strictly to observe the usual sense of the words as intended by the compilers and imposers; and that several expressions in the public formularies if thus taken are not susceptible of an Arian interpretation.¹⁴ The controversy now subsided; but it was not without result. After this a few, indeed, declined preferments that required resubscription, but most of those concerned took the easier way, and continued to hold their benefices without censure. There was consequently

¹¹ Cf. Waterland, *A Vindication of Christ's Divinity* (Cambridge, 1719), followed by *A Second Vindication* (1723), and *A Further Vindication* (1724).

¹² Cf. Waterland, *The Case of Arian Subscription considered; and the several pleas and excuses for it particularly examined and confuted* (Cambridge, 1721); *Supplement to the same* (1722); *Contra* (A. A. Sykes), *The Case of Subscription to the XXXIX Articles considered* (London, 1721); *A Reply to Dr. Waterland's Supplement*, etc. (1722); J. Hay Colligan, *The Arian Movement in England* (Manchester, 1913), chap. iv.

¹³ Priestley cites fourteen different senses in which a subscription to the XXXIX Articles has been vindicated by divines. Cf. *Priestly, Works*, xix, 527 f.

¹⁴ Cf. Van Mildert, *Life of Waterland*, pp. 58-67.

wide and deep unrest both within and without the Church. At least one Bishop encouraged sophistical subscription, and some, relying upon episcopal indulgence, were bold enough to omit the Creed¹⁵ or otherwise the liturgy to suit themselves; but no outward change was accomplished. Thus those that had desired reform, being left undisturbed, at length settled back comfortably and did nothing further, being content to be let alone as they were;¹⁶ while among the Dissenters adherence to the Athanasian doctrine of Christ tended to lessen, and non-subscription became more and more the practice.

¹⁵ It was not until the revision of the Book of Common Prayer in 1928 that the use of the Athanasian Creed in worship made optional. It was never adopted by the Protestant Episcopal Church in America.

¹⁶ Cf. Herbert S. Skeats and Charles S. Miall, *History of the Free Churches of England, 1688-1891* (London, 1891), p. 237. "In the days of which we write it was certainly more profitable, so far as this world was concerned, for a man to live in violation of the whole of the moral law than for him to deny the truth of the Athanasian Creed."

CHAPTER XIV

THE ARIAN MOVEMENT AMONG THE DISSENTERS

AT THE VERY JUNCTURE when the Trinitarian Controversy in the established Church was fading away, and the Arian movement had not yet developed in either the Church or Dissent, an interesting case occurred in a quarter somewhat apart from the centers of religious thought in England, which yet forms a sort of connecting link between the controversies in the Church that have been related in the last two chapters, and the Arian movement among the Dissenters with which the present chapter will deal. The field of this episode was in Dublin, and its central figure was the Presbyterian minister, Thomas Emlyn (1663-1741).¹ Though born of parents that were of the Church, he was educated in Dissenting Academies and prepared for a ministry among the Presbyterians. He began his ministry by serving for five years as chaplain to a lady in the North of Ireland, and was afterwards for a short time minister of a congregation at Lowestoft in Suffolk. Here he made the acquaintance of a neighboring Independent minister,² and the two discussed together Sherlock's *Vindication of the Trinity*, with the result that his friend became a convinced Socinian, and Emlyn an Arian. Called in 1691 to be associate minister of the important Presbyterian church in Wood Street, Dublin, he soon became much beloved for both his preaching and his personal relations as a diligent pastor. In his preaching he avoided reference to controversial doctrines lest he give needless offence, and confined himself to practical subjects. Thus for eleven years he gave great satisfaction to his congregation and to his older colleague, Mr. Boyse; but at length an influential member of the congregation, noting the omission of any reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, called on Emlyn to account for the omis-

¹ Cf. *Memoirs of his Life and Writings*, by his son, and his own *True Narrative of the Proceedings* against him, etc., prefixed to his *Works*, ed. 4 (London, 1746), vol. 1. Wallace, *Antitritin*, III, 503-538, William Turner, *Lives of Eminent Unitarians* (London, 1840-43), I, 57-88, Sparks, *Collection of Essays*, IV, 173-208.

² William Manning (1630-1711) of Peasenhall, Suffolk. He is said to have been the only one of the ejected clergy to become a Unitarian.

sion. He frankly owned that he believed in the supreme deity of the Father alone, but offered to resign his charge if that were desired. The Dublin ministers seem to have exercised some authority over the individual congregations, and when the matter was reported to them they immediately forbade him to occupy his pulpit longer; but when he offered to the officers of his own congregation to resign, they asked him instead to take a leave of absence in London, hoping that in his absence the trouble would blow over. On the contrary, his critics took advantage of their opportunity by violent attacks from their pulpits to stir up great odium against him, and to write accusing letters to the London ministers. When after some ten weeks' absence Emlyn returned to Dublin to attend to family affairs, he found it necessary, in self-defence against the evil things that were being said of him, to publish a tract entitled, *An Humble Inquiry into the Scripture Account of Jesus Christ* (1702),³ intending at once to return to England. Before he could do so, however, two of the most bigoted Dissenters procured his arrest and prosecution before a secular court on a charge of blasphemy.

The conduct of the trial that followed, with two Archbishops sitting upon the bench, was marked by extreme prejudice and unfairness, and Emlyn was refused permission to speak for himself. The jury, overawed, found him guilty 'of writing and publishing an infamous and scandalous libel declaring that Jesus Christ is not the supreme God.' He barely escaped the pillory, and was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and to pay a fine of £1,000; the Chief Justice adding that had it been in Spain or Portugal the punishment would have been death at the stake. The exorbitant fine was quite beyond Emlyn's ability to pay, and he therefore lay in prison for more than two years, during which time not one of his former associates among the Dissenting ministers (save only his late colleague, Mr. Boyse) visited him. His enforced leisure he occupied in writing, and on Sundays he held religious services, preaching to his fellow-prisoners and some of his old congregation who gathered to hear him. At length after repeated appeals, his friends secured favor for him, and got his fine reduced to £70, which was paid;

³ See his *Works*, ed. 4, vol. 1; also in *Unitarian Tracts*, vol. 14, and in Sparks, *Collection of Essays*, 14, 209-275. Answered by Emlyn's colleague, Joseph Boyse, *A Vindication of the True Deity of our Blessed Saviour* (1703); reply by Emlyn, *General Remarks on Mr. Boyse's Vindication* (1704).

but even then the Archbishop at first insisted on a shilling in the pound of the whole fine, which the law allowed him, though at length he grudgingly agreed to a reduction to £20. A famous liberal Bishop gave a sarcastic summary of the case in words that have often been quoted: 'The Non-conformists accused him, the Conformists condemned him, the Secular power was called in, and the cause ended in an imprisonment and a very great fine: two methods of conviction about which the gospel is silent.'⁴ The case of Emlyn aroused wide sympathy in London, though few ventured to give open evidence of it; but he was the last Dissenter to suffer imprisonment for denial of the Trinity.⁵

Just before his release, the anti-Arian General Synod of Ulster, in June, 1705, made subscription to the Westminster Confession compulsory for candidates for the ministry. After his release he returned to London, where finding no Dissenting pulpit open to him, he preached for several years to a dwindling congregation at Cutlers' Hall without pay. The Dissenting ministers were apparently reluctant to incur suspicion of approving his heresy, though two General Baptist brethren opened to him their pulpit in the Barbican. He was in narrow circumstances, but he was honored by many, both in the Church and among the Dissenters, as one that had suffered more than any other man of his time for freedom of conscience; and he lived to enjoy an intimate friendship with Whiston and Clarke, who also had experienced what it is to suffer for conscience' sake. An effort to have him prosecuted in London for his views proved abortive. His *Humble Inquiry* had much influence on the still smoldering controversy in the Church; and it is notable for having been the only English Unitarian book reprinted in America before the rise of the Unitarian Controversy there.⁶ As time went on he became increasingly busy with his pen,

⁴ Benjamin Hoadly, *Works* (London, 1773), i, 357; often mistakenly ascribed to Sir Richard Steele. Quoted by Lindsey, *Historical View*, 327-329; cf. also Sparks, *Collection*, i, 262.

⁵ The Blasphemy Act was from the beginning until its repeal in 1813 practically a dead letter. Edward Elwall, a Sabbatarian Baptist of Wolverhampton, who held Unitarian views, was, it is true, arraigned for blasphemy at Stafford in 1726, but was discharged on a technicality, and the case was dropped. Cf. Lindsey, *Sequel to the Apology*, etc. (London, 1776), pp. 10-17; *The Triumph of Truth, being an account of the Trial of Mr. Elwall*, etc., in Joseph Priestley, *Works* (London, 1817-32), ii, 417-429; 'Memoir of Mr. Edward Elwall,' *Universal Theological Magazine*, i (1804), 283-287.

⁶ Boston, 1756, and again 1790.

and his writings, all written with force and learning, had no little influence in the discussions of the Trinity and the deity of Christ.⁷ He was thus a link between the Socinians in the Church in the seventeenth century, who included some of his tracts among their own, and the Arian Dissenters. In 1726, upon the death of the Rev. James Peirce of Exeter, minister of a congregation that had separated from the Presbyterians on the issue of Arianism, Emlyn was approached about becoming his successor; but in view of his declining years and infirm health he felt bound to decline the attractive offer. He lived, however, until 1743, when he died in his eighty-first year.

Emlyn was pleased to describe himself as 'a true Scriptural Trinitarian,' and to insist that he worshiped Christ 'on Unitarian principles.' But it is more accurate to call him an Arian in the sense of the term then current in England; while he was the first minister who publicly took the Unitarian name then gradually coming into use. He held, indeed, that Christ was divine, but yet was God only in an inferior sense, and should be given only an inferior worship, not as the Supreme Being, but as an intercessor or mediator subordinate to the Father. His writings thus contributed much to prepare the way for the Arianism that (reenforced by the writings of Whiston and Clarke about to agitate the Church) was soon to dominate the progressive element among the Dissenters. Thought currents flowed swiftly at Dublin after Emlyn's trial. His co-minister heartily regretted the action taken, and did what he could to atone for it. Many of the members of his old church grew ashamed of it, and when he returned for occasional visits they received him with great kindness. His congregation fell off from the day of his leaving it. In less than a generation they called to their pulpit a minister of liberal sympathies, the Rev. John Abernethy who had already become the leader of the Non-subscribers in the North of Ireland; and in a half-century his old church had itself become Arian in tone, and steadily gravitated toward ultimate Unitarianism.

After following this interesting side-current in the history of religious liberty, more or less isolated from the course of affairs in England, we

⁷ Besides works already mentioned there were *A Vindication of the Worship of the Lord Jesus Christ on Unitarian Principles* (1706); *The Supreme Deity of God the Father Demonstrated* (1707); several tracts in controversy with the Rev. Charles Leslie (1708); several on the text I John v. 7 (1715-20); and a confutation of a work on the Trinity by some London ministers (1719), all included in the collected edition of his works in 3 volumes, ed. 4 (the best), London, 1746.

now return to trace the movement of the main stream. By the end of the seventeenth century the atmosphere of the Puritan element in English Christianity had grown much mellowed than it had been in the days of the Commonwealth and the Westminster Assembly; and now with the passage of the Toleration Act the Dissenters, being at last guaranteed religious liberty and security, took on new life. Instead of worshipping longer in private houses, they began to build themselves at first plain chapels in back streets or alleys and later, as their strength grew, stately buildings in public view. In London, where the merchants and tradesmen were largely Dissenters, they converted more than twenty of the halls of the great trading guilds or companies into meeting-places, and fitted them up with pulpits, pews and galleries, or erected separate meeting-houses adjoining them. Taken together they were made up for the most part of the three bodies of Independents, Presbyterians and Baptists. The Independents were the most conservative in belief and generally strict Calvinists, and were the most democratic in spirit. The Presbyterians were not only quite the most numerous, but were also the most learned and wealthy and the most influential socially and politically, and they were drifting steadily away from Calvinism toward generous freedom in belief. The Baptists, while socially mostly of the humbler classes, were the most tolerant in doctrinal matters.⁸ Apparently the Presbyterians, influenced perhaps by their social and political traditions, had not escaped the influence of the controversies about the Trinity that had of late agitated the established Church; and it will presently be seen that as soon as the Arian Controversy became rife their aversion to creed subscription left them peculiarly open to influences from that direction. At all events, being once set free from the necessity of subscribing the Articles of the Church, they were little inclined to submit to a new bondage by enforcing subscription even to standards of their own. Although the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterians and the Savoy Confession of the Congregationalists still stood indeed as the nominal standards of their doctrine, yet attention was less and less fixed on them, and their high Calvinism was tending to be if not consciously outgrown, at least less emphasized and more ignored.

Besides the general influences already mentioned, tending in ways more or less undefined to open the way for Arianism, were two more

⁸ Cf. Skeats and Miall, *Free Churches*, pp. 136-145.

active ones in the field of education 1. the Dissenting schools and Academies to which they sent their youth for their education when the English Universities were closed against them, and 2 the Universities in Holland and Scotland to which those that could afford it repaired for their higher training, especially in preparation for the ministry. For the contribution that they made to our movement these deserve especial notice⁹ When the Act of Uniformity was passed in 1662, and the nonconforming clergy were ejected from their livings and forbidden even to teach unless they would conform, many of them being among the best educated men in the kingdom, quietly evaded the law, and in order to get a living conducted private schools in their own homes. Despite the danger of prosecution, and having sometimes to remove from one remote place to another to escape arrest, they continued their work until many of these private schools grew and developed into Academies Of these there were first and last more than eighty, of which at least twenty-two were founded by ejected ministers¹⁰ Many of them, it is true, were small, had but one or two tutors and did not outlive their founders, who often, besides a heavy load of teaching, ministered to congregations on Sundays They were widely scattered over the country, and varied in size from a bare handful of pupils to several score;¹¹ but their tutors were men of ability and superior scholarship, and so thorough was the training given divinity students in their four or five years' course that they were sometimes admitted to the University degree at Edinburgh after a residence of only one year.

⁹ On the Academies cf Toulmin *Historical View* pp 215-241, Irene Parker, *Dissenting Academies in England* (Cambridge 1914) Collman *Arian Movement*, chap viii, do, *Eighteenth Century Nonconformity* (London, 1915), chap x, Alexander Gordon, *Addresses Biographical and Historical* (London 1922), chap iii, Herbert McLachlan, *The Unitarian Movement in the Religious Life of England* (London, 1934), pp 71-140, do, *English Education under the Test Acts* (Manchester 1931), Olive Griffiths, *Religion and Learning A Study in English Presbyterian Thought from the Bartholomew Ejections (1662) to the Foundation of the Unitarian Movement* (Cambridge, 1935)

¹⁰ For the full list cf McLachlan *English Education* pp 6-15 Of the larger and more important ones in their relation to our movement may be especially mentioned those at Findern, Northampton, Daventry, Exeter, Warrington, Carmarthen, Hoxton, and Bridgewater For an account of Warrington Academy cf Herbert McLachlan, *Warrington Academy, its History and Influence* (Manchester, 1943), Henry Arthur Bright, *Historical Sketch of Warrington Academy* (Liverpool, 1859), and a series of articles by V F., in *Monthly Repository*, viii (1813)

¹¹ In all several thousand were educated at nonconformist Academies between the Restoration and 1704

These Academies made a notable impress on English education in the eighteenth century and, when Dissenting students were debarred from entering the English Universities, furnished them a more thorough and a broader education than could at that time be had at Oxford or Cambridge. These, in their reaction from the exacting standards of the Puritan regime, had after the Restoration sunk, both intellectually and morally, to the lowest level in their history; while the Academies at this period, as has been well said, 'were the greatest schools of their day, and stood immeasurably higher as regards efficiency than any other educational institutions.'¹² Progressive in outlook, they broke new paths, employed new methods, replaced Latin by English as the medium of instruction, and emphasized the sciences, historical and social subjects, and the modern languages. The better Academies as a rule required no subscription to creeds, and in their theological teaching encouraged generous freedom of inquiry, and open discussion of various views or authorities or of varying interpretations of Scripture and the doctrines taught in it. Hence it was but natural that in the theological ferment of the seventeenth century not a few of the ministers educated in these Academies should have relaxed their doctrinal opinions and gravitated in the Arian direction.

It was naturally the ministers of the Dissenting churches that as religious teachers were to lead their congregations in the direction of Arianism and, after the Academies, these were most influenced by the foreign Universities to which many went for their higher training. For it was common for the better educated of the divinity students in the first half of the eighteenth century to repair to Holland, especially to the Universities at Leiden and Utrecht, which Socinian thought had for a generation been slowly penetrating, and moderating their former extreme Calvinism. Thus a considerable number of those who had studied there presently became leaders of the Arian movement among the Dissenters, among them Peirce and Hallet of Exeter, the famous New Testament scholar Nathaniel Lardner, and others. An even larger number went from the Academies to the Scottish Universities, where no theological tests were imposed, especially to Glasgow, where Francis Hutcheson the philosopher and William Leechman the theologian were teaching a broad theology, and shaping the think-

¹² Cf. Parker, *Dissenting Academies*, p. 45 f.

ing of many students from both England and the North of Ireland, who were to adopt Arian views and to spread them in their churches.¹⁸

It might easily be suspected that the Arian movement among Dissenters of the first half of the eighteenth century was an outgrowth of the Deism that had culminated a little earlier, and had seemed to leaders in the Church to offer much greater danger to religion than the views of Dr. Clarke; but such does not appear to have been the fact. The Deists (they preferred for themselves the name of Freethinkers) were largely men reared in the Church who considered themselves Christians, but who, influenced by the materialistic views of Hobbes and the rationalism of Locke, and the new views of the natural world that Newton had made current, aimed to make Christianity simpler and more rational by placing it on the solid foundation of Natural Religion alone. To this end they sought to eliminate all supernatural elements from the record, and all divine mysteries from the doctrines of the Church. Thus they tried, often in coarse and irreverent attacks, to discredit the divine authority of Scripture, and delighted to drag into light all the worst things that could be dug up out of the past history of the Church, as though these were characteristic of Christianity. Deism had able thinkers as its spokesmen, but their negative and critical spirit was such as to make them in effect practically enemies of organized religion. Nevertheless they compelled the Church to modify its apologetics and rest its defences of Christianity on more solid grounds. Its better elements were at length absorbed, somewhat transformed, into modern liberal religion, though this was not until modern biblical criticism and modern science and philosophy had prepared the way. While it is true that the doctrinal views of the Deists are in important respects similar to those of Unitarians of a later period, yet their divergences from those of the Arian Dissenters are no less marked; for while the Deists held that there was no revelation of religious truths outside of Nature, the Arians of the eighteenth century based their faith on the authority of Scripture, and believed in the Bible as a revelation of divine truth as devoutly as did the orthodox. Among the severest critics of Deism were leaders in the Arian camp such as Hallet, Foster, Benson, and above all Nathaniel Lardner with his classical work on *The Credibility of the Gospel History* (1727 and

¹⁸ Cf. McLachlan, *Unitarian Movement*, pp. 241-243; *id.*, *English Education*, pp. 29-32.

following); and the Arian interest among the Dissenters hardly took shape until the force of Deism was pretty well spent.¹⁴

Springing from so wide a background of diverse influences, the nascent Arianism among the Dissenters is not easily traced. Many of the more progressive ministers, however, being no longer bound by the Westminster standards, though not venturing to invite censure or arouse heated controversy by avowing them openly, were doubtless more or less affected by liberal views. Before 1719, indeed, only three cases had appeared above the surface distinct enough to attract attention.¹⁵ But in 1717 an issue arose at Exeter that fanned all the smoldering embers into a flame, made it necessary for the hitherto latent and tacit Arians to declare themselves, and caused between them and the orthodox a permanent breach in the Nonconformist congregations. It has been called 'one of the two momentous episodes in the history of Nonconformity in England.'¹⁶ Nonconformity had long been strong in the West of England and nowhere more so than at Exeter, where

¹⁴ Cf. Tayler, *Retrospect*, pp. 399-432; Skeats, *Free Churches*, pp. 258-266, Colligan, *Arian Movement*, pp. 136-140, John Leland, *View of the Principal Deistical Writers*, etc. (London, 1757), Hunt, *Religious Thought*, III, 159-196, 377-384, Abbey and Overton, *English Church*, I, 527-529.

¹⁵ In 1717 one Hubert Stogdon, a young Presbyterian divinity student from Hallets Academy at Exeter, who had shown such Arian sympathies that he had little hope of being accepted for ordination by the local clergy, was privately recommended by three liberal Exeter ministers for ordination in another district. This action was censured by the Exeter Assembly of ministers two years later. Cf. Jerom Murch, *History of the Presbyterian and General Baptist Churches in the West of England* (London, 1838), pp. 162-164; Joshua Toulmin, 'Memoir of the Rev. Hubert Stogdon,' *Monthly Repository*, IV (1809), 57-62, 121-125, 247-255.

In the same year, Luke Langdon, candidate for a London pulpit, was rejected as an Arian, and the minority in favor of him seceded from the congregation. Again, in 1718, Martin Tomkins, who had studied at Utrecht with Lardner, and at Leiden, was forced after a year's ministry at Stoke Newington to resign his charge, on account of his Arian sympathies. Cf. *The Case of Mr. Martin Tomkins* (London, 1719), Tomkins, 'A Letter in Defence of the Arian Hypothesis,' *Theological Repository*, III (1795), 257-259.

¹⁶ Cf. Colligan *Arian Movement*, p. 47. The literature on the Exeter controversy is extensive. Apart from the general account in Murch's *History*, and Turner's *Eminent Unitarians*, I, 104-112, the most important sources are in the controversial pamphlets of the time, such as James Peirce, *The Case of the Ministers Ejected at Exeter* (London, 1719), (Josiah Eveleigh), *Account of the Reasons why many citizens of Exon have withdrawn from the Ministry of Mr. Joseph Hallet and Mr. James Peirce* (London, 1719), Peirce, *Defence of the Case of the Ministers*, etc. (Exeter, 1719); Eveleigh, *Defence of the Account*, etc. (London, 1719), (anon.) *A Plain and Faithful Narrative of the Differences at Exeter* (London, 1719), Peirce, *The Western Inquisition* (London, 1720), (Enty, John), *Answer to Mr. Peirce's Western Inquisition* (London, 1721). All summarized in

early in the eighteenth century its adherents were both numerous and powerful. They had three congregations, administered under a modified Presbyterian régime by a joint committee of thirteen, the third being served in rotation by the ministers of the other two. Of the four ministers in 1717 three were liberal in their sympathies, and the fourth was a strict Calvinist, though no division had occurred between them. One of the former was Joseph Hallet,¹⁷ the oldest minister at Exeter, son of an ejected minister of the same name. He also conducted an academy for divinity students, in which Arian views were quietly held, and by some were privately discussed. His own son had a clandestine correspondence with Whiston. Hallet's colleague, James Peirce¹⁸ (note the spelling), was minister of the leading congregation, known as James's Meeting. He was a native of London, of good family; and being early orphaned he was brought up by an eminent Nonconformist minister. In his preparation for the ministry he went to Holland for five years' study under famous liberal scholars at Utrecht and Leiden.

Returning to England Peirce first served a congregation at Cambridge, where he formed an intimate friendship with Whiston, but after a few years he removed to Newbury in Berkshire, and there sprang into prominence through an able work in defence of the Dissenters, written in reply to an attack upon them by a prominent Clergyman.¹⁹ Hence he came to be regarded as the first man of his party, and was widely admired; and it naturally followed that when in 1713 a vacancy occurred at Exeter in the pulpit of the strongest church in the

Thomas Hearne (comp.), *Account of all the Considerable Books and Pamphlets that have been wrote on either side* (London, 1720) See also Edmund Calamy, *Historical Account of my own Life* (London, 1830), II, 403 ff, Frederick J Powicke, 'Ananism and the Exeter Assembly,' *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* (London), VII (1917), 34-43, Lant Carpenter, *Letters on the Trinity Controversy, inserted in the Exeter Newspapers*, etc (Exeter, 1815), v notice in *Monthly Repository*, X (1815), 192-197; *ibid.*, XII (1817), 523-525, 582-585 For a comprehensive account from a strongly orthodox standpoint, cf David Bogue and James Bennett, *History of Dissenters* (London, 1808), III, 214-249

¹⁷ Cf. John Fox, 'Memoirs of himself,' *Monthly Repository*, XVI (1721), 139 ff.

¹⁸ Cf. Murch, *History*, pp 421-431, Turner, *Eminent Unitarians*, I, 89-122; John Fox, 'Memoirs of James Peirce,' *Monthly Repository*, XVI (1821), 193 ff, 329-331.

¹⁹ *Vindiciae Fratrum Dissidentium in Anglia*, etc. (London, 1710); in reply to William Nichols, *Defensio Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (London, 1710) It is to be noted that in this work (p. 157) Peirce declares that among the Dissenters there is no Socinianism; but in the English translation (1717) this statement is lacking.

West of England he was unanimously chosen for the post.²⁰ The liberal doctrinal views that had for some time been widely spread, at least in the Church, had by now also penetrated the Presbyterian congregation at Exeter, where Whiston and Clarke had been secretly read by a good many before Peirce's arrival, though no open avowal of them had been made, and no heresy had been broached in the pulpit. Peirce, who had hitherto been soundly orthodox, had on his part recently come to realize that he no longer held to the accepted doctrine in its strict form; but as no questions had been asked nor test applied, he held his peace, abstained from preaching on controverted questions, and adhering at all times closely to Scripture confined his preaching to the practical aspects of faith and duty.

Within a year or two after Peirce's settling at Exeter doctrinal discussion became active among the people, and it was whispered that even some of the ministers disbelieved and secretly opposed the doctrine of the deity of Christ. At length suspicion of Peirce's orthodoxy grew so strong that his friends urged him to preach a sermon calculated to set the rumors at rest. Meantime some liberal members of the congregation grew so bold in their talk that early in 1718 the committee of thirteen requested the ministers to preach on the eternal deity of Christ. Peirce resented such interference in his ministry, but complied nevertheless. Yet the self-appointed guardians of the orthodox doctrine, led by one of the younger ministers with the cooperation of some ministers of neighboring congregations in the country, continued to stir up criticism. A guest in Peirce's pulpit preached a sermon openly charging some of the Exeter Dissenters with 'damnable heresies'; and during Peirce's absence for some weeks in London his critics determined to bring the matter before the United Brethren of Devon and Cornwall (commonly called the Exeter Assembly of Ministers), in order to force disavowal of Arianism among them. After long debate the ministers were allowed each to declare his own faith. Peirce declared his faith in the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but as subordinate to the Father; though some refused to submit to such an unwarranted inquisition into what they considered a private matter. A resolution was finally adopted by a large majority asserting the Assembly's belief in the divinity of the three persons in the Trinity.

²⁰ Cf. Calamy, *Historical Account*, ii, 262-264.

Nevertheless Arianism continued to spread.²¹ The matter was fanned into a flame by a swarm of pamphlets pro and con. The Judge of Assizes was so much concerned that he made the danger of Arianism the burden of his charge to the jury, and intimated a possible connection between that and the spread of crime in the city. At this juncture some of the conservatives anxiously wrote to five prominent London ministers²² for advice what to do. Advised by them to consult some of the neighboring ministers, they chose seven from the West of England, all of them men with known orthodox sympathies. These, without hearing Peirce in his own defence, advised in effect that the orthodox ought to separate themselves from Peirce and Hallet. Report was made to the London ministers, who gave their approval; while Peirce on his part informed a layman, John Shute Barrington,²³ parliamentary leader of the Dissenting interest. Correspondence continued on both sides; but before the desired advice was decided upon in London, the opposition at Exeter grew impatient for conclusive action. Three of the proprietors of the chapels therefore arbitrarily seized the keys of James's Meeting and locked Peirce and Hallet out of their pulpit (March 10, 1719, N. S.). Peirce objected to this action as illegal, but a general meeting of all the proprietors of the three chapels ratified the action, and the Assembly endorsed it by a vote of 45 to 19.

The two ejected ministers had many sympathizers, and these at once formed a new society and on the next Sunday (March 15)²⁴ opened a new place of worship, which may thus be regarded as the first congregation in England avowedly devoted to antitrinitarian worship that has continued to the present day. A year later a new place of worship, the Mint Meeting, was erected, in which Peirce preached to a congregation of about 300. Considerably embittered by what he had suffered, and broken in health, he survived but seven years, dying in

²¹ Throughout all this eighteenth century controversy, Arianism was a term of broad and loose connotation, by no means identical with the heresy of the fourth century. It might denote a variety of defections from the orthodox doctrine, but it commonly denoted belief in the subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and denial of the rightfulness of paying supreme divine worship to Christ.

²² Four Lecturers at Salters' Hall, and one other.

²³ Later Lord Barrington. He was at just this time very desirous, in view of measures pending in Parliament, that nothing be done to create division among the Dissenters. Cf. Turner, *Eminent Unitarians*, art. on 'John Shute,' i, 227-248.

²⁴ Cf. Murch, *History*, p. 400.

1726 at the early age of 53 years.²⁵ Thomas Emlyn, as we have seen above, was asked to be his successor, but was too infirm to be able to accept the invitation. Peirce's colleague Hallet had died in 1722 and was succeeded by his son, who became distinguished for his biblical scholarship and as an opponent of the Deists. The current of thought flowed swiftly at Exeter after the ejection. In 1753 the ministers of the Mint Meeting were readmitted to the Exeter Assembly from which they had been excluded a generation before. Peirce's old congregation at James's Meeting in 1749 chose as its minister Micaiah Towgood, who had adopted Arian views, and his successor Timothy Kenrick became a decided Unitarian. By this time the Mint Meeting also had moved on from Arianism to Unitarianism. When James's Meeting was abandoned in 1760, George's Meeting was opened in place of it, and in 1810 it and the Mint Meeting were reunited, and the breach that had lasted for ninety years was healed.²⁶ From this time on Unitarianism spread with unexampled rapidity. The ejection of the two ministers²⁷ made their doctrine popular. Within a generation nearly every Nonconformist church at Exeter had ceased to be orthodox, and many of those in Devon and Somerset followed suit, as well as in London and in the North of England. In less than half a century the old doctrines could hardly be heard in any of the old Presbyterian pulpits in England.²⁸

The Exeter Controversy was immediately followed by the Salters' Hall Controversy. These often seem to be taken for simply two phases of one and the same movement; but though some of the participants were the same in both, yet they were quite distinct in origin, in location, in the main question at issue, in the leading characters, and in their results upon the churches involved. The event marked what was probably the most critical point in the whole history of Protestant Dissent.²⁹ It will be recalled that in the course of the Exeter controversy

²⁵ His tomb is in St Leonard's churchyard, where the Rector forbade the erection of a suitably inscribed monument, but a memorial tablet is in St George's Meeting. Cf Murch, *History* pp 411, 429-431. For a memoir and list of his writings, see *Protestant Dissenter's Magazine*, II (1795), 448-454.

²⁶ In this year the Mint Meeting was sold to the Wesleyans, who reconstructed and still occupy it.

²⁷ There was at least one other similar instance, that of Isaac Gilling, ejected at Newton Abbot, who had refused to declare his faith at the Exeter Assembly. Cf Colligan, *Arian Movement*, p 49.

²⁸ Cf Skeats, *Free Churches*, p 247 f.

²⁹ For good accounts see Colligan, *Arian Movement*, pp 53-63, Skeats, *Free Churches*.

Peirce's opponents sought advice from some of the London ministers, and that considerable correspondence ensued, and as many as 25 ministers of the three denominations, all conservatives, had met to consider the matter.³⁰ They were reluctant to intervene actively in the affairs of sister churches as though claiming some sort of authority over them, and before an acceptable answer had been agreed upon the two ministers were ejected. During the same time Peirce had also been in communication with John Shute Barrington, who was a friend and follower of John Locke, and as leader of the Dissenting party in Parliament was anxious to keep the Dissenters united politically in support of the house of Hanover, and was also deeply concerned in an effort for the repeal of the oppressive Schism Act.³¹ An attempt had been barely defeated to saddle the pending measure with a test concerning the Trinity, but the fate of the movement for repeal was still uncertain, and he wished the forces of Dissent to show a solid front, unweakened by any sort of disagreement. He had therefore called together for counsel on February 5, 1719, a meeting of some influential Dissenters, both ministers and laymen, including several members of Parliament, to consider a manifesto that he had drawn up for adoption and signature by leading ministers, which was calculated to smooth out the quarrel at Exeter. These Advices for Peace, as they came

pp 243-248 Robert W Dale *History of English Congregationalism* (London, 1907), pp 528-539 Alexander Gordon *The Story of Salters Hall* in his *Addresses*, pp 121-153, *id.*, *The Salters Hall Fiasco* *Christian Life* xiv (1888), 285 f, 296 f, Frederick J Powicke, *The Salters Hall Controversy*, *Transactions* vii 34-43, 110-124, 213-233 (1917), Bogue and Bennett *Dissenters* iii 225-228

For the sources see the scores of contemporary controversial pamphlets in Dr Williams's Library London of which the most important (all London 1719) are the following (John Shute Barrington) *Account of the Late Proceedings at Salters Hall* Thomas Bradbury, *Answer to the Reproaches cast on those who Subscribed*, etc., (Benjamin Grosvenor), *An Authentic Account of several things done at Salters Hall* (anon.) *A True Relation of Some Proceedings at Salters Hall* James Peirce, *Animadversions upon A True Relation* etc. (anon.) *A Letter to the Rev Mr James Peirce in answer to his Animadversions* etc. Peirce *A Letter to a Subscribing Minister in Defence of Animadversions*, etc., (Thomas Bradbury) *A Vindication of the Subscribing Ministers, in Answer to An Authentic Account* etc., (anon.) *A Reply to the Subscribing Ministers' Reasons, in their Vindication* etc. (in two parts), (Joshua Oldfield), *An Impartial State of the Late Differences* etc.

³⁰ Cf Colligan, *Arian Movement* p 53

³¹ Passed in 1714, and designed to suppress all Dissenting Academies and schools. It was about to go into effect when Queen Anne died, and it remained practically a dead letter, though not repealed until 1719. Cf Dale, *Congregationalism*, pp 503-505

to be called, stripped of nonessentials, first set forth two preliminary points, which in brief were these: 1) that there are doctrinal errors serious enough to justify a separation between ministers and their people; and that 2) the people concerned are to determine for themselves what these errors are; and then, to complement the above principles, a series of Advices suggesting the methods to be followed in any case arising.

It will be noted that these Advices arose not out of the doctrinal situation at Exeter, but out of a critical situation in Parliament, and hence that they were not proposed as an answer to any request from Exeter, but (for the sake of their political effect) as an attempt to compose a threatened schism among the Dissenters; and the intent of them was therefore to confine any quarrel to the local congregation in which it arose. Hence, in order to enlist the desired support for these Articles, a private committee of ministers of the three main Dissenting bodies (Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist) called together all the ministers in London and vicinity to convene at Salters' Hall on February 19, 1719 (N S), to consider what amendments should be made to the Advices to be sent to the brethren at Exeter. The Schism Act had as a matter of fact been repealed on the day before the date set for the meeting; but the ministers nevertheless met and proceeded to discuss the paper of advices which had been previously prepared by Barrington and unanimously recommended by the preliminary committee.

This was the famous Salters' Hall conference,³² which at its first meetings was apparently composed of a few over a hundred ministers³³ Of the total 150 names ultimately named in the accounts, 80 are ac-

³² Salters' Hall was perhaps the most prominent Presbyterian place of worship in London. It stood in Salters' Hall Court, but the original building is no longer in existence cf. Walter Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting houses in London* etc (London, 1808-14), II, 1-62.

This meeting has traditionally been referred to as the Salters' Hall Synod but it was not a Synod in any proper use of the term, for its members were not delegated with authority from the bodies to which they belonged, nor were its actions binding upon their churches, since they carried only the moral authority of the individual members.

³³ The record attendance, at the session of March 3, is said to have been 123 (Bradbury, *Answer to Reproaches*, p. 15), but the total number of signers to the Advices on either side was 133 (one having oddly enough signed on both sides), to which might be added 17 more who subscribed the doctrinal statements but not the Advices. Evidently some signatures of subscribers were obtained outside the meetings.

counted as Presbyterians, 40 as Independents, and 30 as Baptists.⁸⁴ At the first session it was voted to consider the paper submitted, article by article. It advised a Christian and conciliatory spirit, and against imposing human declarations or doctrinal tests, and recommended adherence instead to the Protestant principle of Scripture as the only rule. The framer of the Advices had aimed to keep out of sight every article of faith and to bring nothing doctrinal under consideration, to submit terms of peace and not matters of faith.

But Dr. Thomas Bradbury, a self-assertive man of great ability, minister of the New Court church in Fetter Lane, one of the oldest Independent congregations in London, taking the lead of the conservatives, protested against the paper from the start, and at the second session, February 24, expressed resentment that laymen (obviously referring to Barrington) should have intruded with their Advices in a matter properly in the province of the ministers. He therefore moved, in order to give the Advices the more weight at Exeter, that they be accompanied by a declaration of the Assembly's faith in the doctrine of the Trinity.⁸⁵ Debate was long and heated. A division was called for, and those opposed to including such a declaration were asked to go up into the gallery. When the count had been made, the motion was declared lost by a vote of 57 to 53. Bradbury was primarily interested in the theological question involved at Exeter; Barrington, ignoring this, was chiefly concerned to preserve harmony among the Dissenters where their cause appeared to be in peril.

Adjournment was had to March 3, and in the interval both sides tried to rally their forces, though with little result. The order of the day was to continue consideration of the Advices; but Bradbury renewed his motion that a declaration of faith be first subscribed. It was objected that this would be imposition of a human interpretation of Scripture as a test of Christian communion, and the motion was ruled out of order. There were hours of angry discussion; but at length a paper was

⁸⁴ Tables of all the ministers on either side are given by Powicke, *Salters' Hall Controversy*, p. 112 f.; in *Monthly Repository*, xiv (1819); and in T. S. James, *History of the Litigation . . . respecting Presbyterian Chapels*, etc. (London, 1867), pp. 705-709. See also the above cited *Authentic Account*, and *True Relation*; as well as the *Layman's Letters to the Dissenting Ministers* (London, 1719), and Whiston's *Memoirs*, p. 220 f.

⁸⁵ Correspondence from Exeter with the ministers in London had already intimated that they did not desire the advices of any that were suspected of Arianism. Cf. Bradbury, *Vindication*, p. 4.

brought forward containing the Article of the Church of England concerning the Trinity, and the corresponding section of the Westminster Catechism, and those willing to subscribe were invited to go up stairs and do so. Several then left the hall, but sixty subscribed, then soon left the house in protest, went to another hall, continued their meeting, and adopted Advices of their own.³⁶ They did not again meet with the remaining members of the conference. The latter returned to the order of the day, continued discussion of the Advices and adjourned for a week. In the meantime committees from both sides attempted to compose their differences, though to no purpose. Summons were sent to all the seceders to attend, but none came. Discussion of the Advices was completed without them, and they were adopted and signed by 73 on March 10. A week later the Advices with their signatures were forwarded to the brethren at Exeter.³⁷ With them went a letter signed by the Moderator in the name of the rest, which declared that they utterly disowned the Arian doctrine, and sincerely believed the doctrine of the Trinity and the proper divinity of Christ, and in addition a statement of twelve reasons why they did not think it proper to subscribe the declaration of doctrines.

The Subscribers on their part finished on March 6 their own Advices, which though having some things in common with them differed materially from those of the Non-subscribers, and on April 7 forwarded them with a subscription to the doctrinal articles above mentioned, with 78 signatures and a letter of transmittal. They were acknowledged on April 11, though the brethren at Exeter made no acknowledgment of the Non-subscribers' communication. Both were in fact already superfluous, for Peirce and Hallet had been ejected on March 10.

The Salters' Hall conference had an effect the very opposite to that aimed at by Barrington in convening the ministers. Instead of uniting the Dissenters more closely, it ended in a division among them that has never since been repaired. It has been a popular tradition that in this division all the Independents took the side of the Subscribers, and all the Presbyterians took the opposite; but this was by no means the case. On the side of the Subscribers the numbers of the Independents

³⁶ See the text of the Subscribers' Advices in Powicke, *Salters' Hall*, p. 220; and in *True Relation of some Proceedings*

³⁷ Text in Powicke, *op cit*, p. 218 f; and in Grosvenor, *Authentic Account*.

and of the Presbyterians were nearly equal; though among the Non-subscribers the Presbyterians outnumbered the Independents six to one, while the Baptists were nearly equally divided.³⁸ Several of the most prominent Dissenters, such as Isaac Watts, Edmund Calamy, and Neal the historian of the Puritans, foreseeing the quarrel and its unfortunate consequences, resolved to have no hand in it.³⁹ The questions at issue at Salters' Hall were very much mixed and confused in the minds and the acts of the participants. It was not a question of the orthodoxy or the heresy of the members. Of the Non-subscribers only two were fairly Arian, though four others might be considered doubtful.⁴⁰ Practically all on either side believed, or supposed they believed, in the Trinity and the divinity of Christ; and it is asserted that as late as 1730 none of the 44 Presbyterian ministers in London was Arian, though half were liberal in tendency, and only 19 were professed Calvinists.⁴¹ In fact, the whole assembly was overwhelmingly opposed to Arianism, witness both the doctrinal statements subscribed by the Subscribers, and the letter appended to the Advices of the Non-subscribers. The fundamental difference between the two parties was in the question whether one should be required to subscribe doctrinal statements as a condition of Christian fellowship; the question whether the individual may enjoy entire intellectual freedom in his religious beliefs, or shall be expected to conform to beliefs that others would impose upon him. The Non-subscribers, who had but lately escaped from persecution on doctrinal grounds, felt that their whole religious liberty as Protestants was endangered if they consented in their religious thought to submit to a bondage which a majority might impose as a condition of religious fellowship. It is, however, also quite possible that though they considered themselves still orthodox according to their

³⁸ At the original division on February 24, nearly all the Independents voted with the minority, while the Baptists were divided 10 to 9 (Skeats, *Free Churches*, p. 244 n.). The detailed figures as to the signatures to the Advices sent to Exeter by the Subscribers are: Presbyterians 23, Independents 25, Baptists 13, Total 61; or, if signatures to the doctrinal Articles be included, Presbyterians 31, Independents 32, Baptists 15, Total 78. Signatures to the Advices sent by Non-subscribers were Presbyterians 48, Independents 8, Baptists 17, Total 73. It is said that "great pains and some pressure were used to obtain the Subscribers' signatures." (*op. cit.*, p. 246.)

³⁹ Cf. Calamy, *Historical Account*, pp. 411-414.

⁴⁰ Cf. Powicke, *Salters' Hall*, p. 123.

⁴¹ Cf. Samuel J. Baird, *The Socinian Apostasy of the English Presbyterian Churches* (Philadelphia, 1887), p. 29.

old standards, they may yet have entertained an uneasy suspicion that their theology was undergoing an insensible change; and that they wished to retain full freedom to interpret Scripture for themselves.

The effect of the meetings at Salters' Hall did not cease with the answers sent to the brethren at Exeter.⁴² An angry pamphlet war between the two parties, running to some 70 different items, and marked by violence and animosity, went on for a year or more, and permanently widened the breach between them. Many of the original Presbyterian and Independent ministers were, after Salters' Hall, in one way or another affected by the Arianism that was now everywhere in the air. Those that had been unwilling to subscribe first ceased to proclaim the old doctrines as vitally important, then ignored them, and finally denied them outright. Thus throughout the middle of the eighteenth century Arian thought spread steadily, and then at the end of the century insensibly slipped over into Unitarianism, as the older ministers died off and younger ones came forward devoted to the 'new notions' of a new time.

In this period of transition the constituent elements of Dissent suffered considerable rearrangement, and new lines of cleavage developed. Independents that were reluctant to commit themselves to doctrinal statements more definite than Scripture itself were naturally drawn into closer relations with the Non-subscribers; and Presbyterians that wished to preserve their old beliefs unimpaired naturally gravitated to the Subscribers. The names Presbyterian and Independent gradually lost their original meanings. Many of the old Presbyterian congregations continued to retain their old name, indeed, but the old Presbyterian denomination silently disappeared, when at the end of the century the Unitarians began to be organized.⁴³ The General Baptists tended to fraternize with the Non-subscribers, and the Calvinistic Baptists with the Congregationalists. Half of the old Presbyterian chapels are now Congregational, and many of the old Independent chapels are now Unitarian.

The episode of Salters' Hall marks a significant point in the history

⁴² Cf. Bogue & Bennett, *Dissenters*, iii, 377-390.

⁴³ A joint fund was established by the Presbyterian and Congregational churches of London in 1689, to assist poor ministers or congregations or students for the ministry. When the Congregationalists in 1695 withdrew and established a separate fund, the Presbyterian majority continued the fund and kept the Presbyterian name.

of freedom of thought in religion Whiston acclaimed this as 'the first example of a body of Christians [making a] public declaration for Christian liberty in matters of religion.'⁴⁴ Dr. John Taylor of Norwich also speaks to the same purpose when he says, "This should always be remembered to their honor, as being the only instance, perhaps, that can be produced out of church history, for many centuries, of any synod of ministers declaring in favor of religious liberty.'⁴⁵ Henceforth it became increasingly common not to require acceptance of formal confessions of faith from either ministers or church members. Another noteworthy circumstance is that from Salters' Hall onward the whole Dissenting movement began sensibly to decline in vigor, Subscribers equally with Non-subscribers,⁴⁶ while no fewer than eighteen of the Non-subscribing ministers at Salters' Hall soon conformed to the Church of England.

Apart from the general Arian drift among the United Dissenters before and after the middle of the eighteenth century, several sporadic cases occurred in the same period, though not connected with it, which deserve mention. Thus the Quaker Richard Claridge in his *Tractatus de Trinitate* (1726) argued against the Trinity as unscriptural and confusing; and both George Fox and Robert Barclay, also Quakers, discarded the term Trinity as without Scripture warrant. The Rev. Philip Gibbs was dismissed from his Hackney church (1738) for his change of views.⁴⁷ One Sayer Rudd, a Baptist preacher who had become liberal and was dismissed from the ministry (1734), had a meeting-house built for him in Snow Street, London, where he preached for a few years to

⁴⁴ Cf. his *Memoirs*, p. 221. But he overlooked the fact that as early as 1700, when the General Baptist preacher, Matthew Caffin, pastor of a church at Horsham, was called to account for disbelieving the divinity of Christ, though the General Assembly disapproved his views, and the case was long pending, they refused to excommunicate him. Cf. Adam Taylor, *History of the English General Baptists* (London, 1818), I, 463-480; Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists* (London, 1814), I, 548-555, II, 569-572; Crosby, *English Baptists*, III, 116 f., 280-285, IV, 328-342. In 1730, at a great meeting of the General Baptists in London, it was unanimously voted not to make any human explanations necessary to Christian communion. Cf. Whiston, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

⁴⁵ Cf. his *Narrative of Mr. Joseph Rawson's Case* (London, 1737), p. 10 n.

⁴⁶ Cf. Skeats, *Free Churches*, p. 266, Powicke, *Salters' Hall*, p. 123; and his article in *Transactions of Unitarian Historical Society* (London, 1918), I, 101-128, stating that no more Non-subscribing churches than Subscribing ones became extinct owing to the "Arian blight."

⁴⁷ Cf. J. Hay Colligan, *Nineteenth Century Nonconformity* (London, 1915), p. 113; Gibbs, *Letter to the congregation of Protestant Dissenters at Hackney* (London, 1737).

a small congregation; and this was the first church in the city erected expressly for Unitarian worship.⁴⁸

Echoes of Salters' Hall were not slow in reaching the ministers in New England, and the doctrinal consequences were at once appreciated. Cotton Mather wrote to Bradbury from Boston in September, 1719, reporting lamentation among the American brethren over the lapse into Arianism in England, and while allowing toleration to all good citizens insisted that Arians should be excluded from church membership.⁴⁹

The history of the non-subscribing churches from Salters' Hall to the end of the eighteenth century is a difficult one to trace and relate, being that of a large and widely scattered group of mutually independent congregations, opposed to ecclesiastical domination, indeed, and firmly committed to individual freedom of belief, but not compactly knit together by organization as a denomination for carrying on any concerted work for their common cause. These churches of the old dissent were largely composed of well-to-do people of the middle class, including also some wealthy merchants and country gentlemen, accustomed to think and act for themselves and jealous of their independence. What they signified in the religious, intellectual and public life of eighteenth-century England can perhaps best be gathered by a glance at a few of their representative ministers. As a class these were able men of generous culture and ample education, interested in public affairs, active in broad-minded public service, and competent leaders in thought and action.

First and foremost of these ministers was Nathaniel Lardner (1684-1768), counted the most learned theologian of the Independents. He prepared for the ministry at Utrecht and Leiden, but handicapped by his poor delivery and his growing deafness he did not find a settlement until middle life, and indeed was never ordained. Meantime he had engaged in controversy with the Deists and been pursuing the studies in early Christian history which led to his great work on *The Credibility of the Gospel History* (London, 1727-57), which made him the founder of modern critical research into early Christian litera-

⁴⁸ Cf. Alexander Gordon, 'Sayer Rudd, M.D.,' *Christian Life*, xlv (1920), 330 f.; Crosby, *English Baptists*, iii, 286 f. After his patron's death in 1788 he conformed.

⁴⁹ Cf. Cotton and Increase Mather, *Three Letters from New England, relating to the controversy of the present time* (London, 1721).

ture, and won him international reputation as a scholar of the first rank. His studies in this field led him to the view that 'there is one God, even the Father; and that Jesus Christ is a man with a reasonable soul and a human body,' that is, beyond Arianism to a Unitarian belief. This view, expressed in his celebrated *Letter on the Logos*,⁵⁰ had considerable influence among the Dissenting ministers and was the means of converting Joseph Priestley from Arianism to Unitarianism. He was honored with a doctorate from Aberdeen, and continued to publish learned works until well after his eightieth year. He affirmed, from inspection of his papers, that Isaac Watts was, in his last thoughts, of his opinion as to the human nature of Christ.⁵¹

The most distinguished of the Arian preachers was James Foster (1697-1753). He was a native of Exeter, and studied for the ministry in Hallet's Academy, but seeking settlement at about the time of the Exeter controversy he found much difficulty for several years in finding a church, for he defended liberty of belief and accepted the views of Peirce and Emlyn. In fact, he had all but decided to give up the ministry when, having already adopted the views of the Baptists, he was invited to be minister of the Barbican church in London, succeeding their famous Dr. Gale. Here his success in the pulpit was so great that he presently became the most popular of all the Dissenting preachers in the city, and so remained for more than twenty years. He also ably controverted the Deists, and published a series of important religious essays which had wide influence.⁵² In 1744 he was called to be minister of the Pinners' Hall congregation, and he was honored with the Doctor's degree from Aberdeen; but after a few years died at the early age of 55.

George Benson (1699-1762) was distinguished among the Non-subscribers by his contributions to New Testament scholarship. He was educated first in an academy at Whitehaven, and then at the University of Glasgow, where he forsook Calvinism and became a convinced Arian. After some years of ministry to a country congregation he preached for several years to a congregation in Southwark, and then

⁵⁰ Written to Lord Barrington in 1730, but not published until 1759, and even then anonymously.

⁵¹ Cf. Lardner's *Works*, with life by Andrew Kippis (London, 1829); Turner, *Eminent Unitarians*, i, 126-163; Priestley, *Works*, I, i, 90-94.

⁵² Cf. Turner, *Eminent Unitarians*, i, 164-200; Sparks, *Collection of Essays*, v, 169-343.

for over twenty years first as colleague and then as successor of Dr. Lardner. He was for many years engaged on a *Paraphrase and Notes on the New Testament Epistles*, continuing in their spirit the works of Locke and Peirce. These works were highly esteemed both by Bishops in the Church, with several of whom he had friendly intercourse, and by continental scholars, and one of them was translated by the distinguished German scholar Michaelis. Against the Deists he published a work on *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1743), and like several of his contemporaries he was honored with a degree from Aberdeen.⁵³

One of the most learned and eminent divines of the eighteenth century was Samuel Chandler (1693-1766). He was son of a Dissenting minister, studied in several small academies, and at 23 became minister of a suburban London congregation. He was one of the Non-subscribers at Salters' Hall, and distinguished himself as lecturer in a week-day series at the Old Jewry, one of the principal congregations of Dissenters in London, was soon called to be one of its ministers, and preached there for more than 40 years. He was a powerful and popular preacher. As a convinced Arian he published numerous works defending Christian evidences against the Deists, and as a champion of Dissent vindicated its principles against the attacks of the Church; yet one of his writings was reprinted in a *Collection of Theological Tracts* compiled by Bishop Richard Watson (1785). He was a man of great abilities and wide learning, and was honored by both Edinburgh and Glasgow universities.

Caleb Fleming (1698-1779) was another of the able and distinguished liberal dissenting ministers who, brought up a Calvinist, became first Arian and then Unitarian. Though he had given much attention to theology, he did not study for the ministry, and did not enter it until he was forty years old. His early writings attracted attention, and he had a flattering opportunity to take orders in the Church, but was unwilling to comply with its formulas. Entering the Presbyterian ministry he served the congregation in Bartholomew Close for twelve years, and then succeeded Dr. Foster at Pinners' Hall, where he preached for many years. He was the first Dissenter to preach the simple humanity of Christ from the beginning to the end of his ministry. He was an intimate friend of Dr. Lardner, wrote against the Deists, and published

⁵³ Cf. *Firmin, op. cit.*; Sparks, *op. cit.*, iv, 131-172.

numerous theological writings. The University of St. Andrews honored him with the Doctor's degree.⁵⁴

John Taylor of Norwich (1694-1761) was recognized by both Dissenters and churchmen as one of the most learned divines of the century. He was born in Lancashire and educated in Dissenting academies at Whitehaven and Findern. He began his ministry with an obscure congregation which paid him a salary of but £25 a year, but after eighteen years there, spent in industrious studies which bore fruit later, he was called to the important church at Norwich. Here his preaching was distinguished by straightforwardness on doctrinal questions, in which he took the side of freedom. Though an Arian in belief, he disowned all party names other than Christian, and did not much concern himself with the usual controversies about the Trinity and the deity of Christ, though he dealt boldly with other orthodox doctrines. Thus in 1740 he published a work of great ability and learning on *The Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, which cut up the Calvinistic doctrine root and branch, and won him great fame as a liberal theologian. It produced a wide, deep and permanent effect both at home and abroad.⁵⁵ He also published *The Scripture Doctrine of Atonement* and other writings, of which one was included by Bishop Watson in his *Collection of Theological Tracts*; but his greatest work of scholarship was his *Hebrew Concordance* (London, 1754-57), on which he labored for

⁵⁴ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xiii (1818), 409-413.

⁵⁵ At home it was answered by Isaac Watts, John Wesley, and David Jennings, *Vindication of the Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin* (London, 1741). In America, years afterwards, Dr. Jonathan Edwards, the very able champion of Calvinism in New England, wrote of it in the preface (p. xi) to his last work, published after his death (*The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended*; Boston, 1758), "No one book has done so much towards rooting out of these Western Parts of New England the principles and scheme of religion maintained by our excellent Fore-fathers, the Divines and Christians who first settled this country, and alienated the minds of so many from what I think are evidently some of the main Doctrines of the Gospel, as that which Dr. Taylor has published against the Doctrine of Original Sin. This book has now for many years been spread abroad in the land without any answer to it, and so has gone on to prevail with little controul."

In the North of Ireland a Calvinistic preacher is related to have said to his flock from the pulpit, "I must warn you, my brethren, against a book called the *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, written by one John Taylor, of Norwich, and which has lately been printed at Belfast, and sent all round the country, to pervert the people from their good old faith. I desire that none of you will read it; for it is a bad book, and a dangerous book, and an heretical book; and, what is worse than all, the book is unanswerable." Cf. John Taylor, *History of the Octagon Church, Norwich* (London, 1848), p. 27, n.

fourteen years, and which won him the friendship of many distinguished churchmen and foreign scholars. His office in the pulpit, however, was not neglected, and his congregation so increased that in 1756 it erected a larger place of worship, the famed Octagon Chapel. Not long thereafter he was urged to become Tutor in Divinity at the newly established academy at Warrington, and at no little sacrifice removed thither. His labors there were faithful and able, but unhappy, and were marred by ill health until his sudden death after but four years. He was honored by the University of Glasgow with the degree of Doctor of Divinity.⁵⁶

The most distinguished champion of the Protestant Dissenters and of their secession from the Church was, after James Peirce, Micaiah Towgood (1700-1792). He was grandson of one of the ejected clergy of 1662, was born at Axminster in Devonshire, and spent his whole life in that county. He was educated at the Taunton academy, and entering the Presbyterian ministry soon after the Exeter controversy took sides with the Non-subscribers in the division that followed Salters' Hall. For over a quarter-century he ably served two churches in smaller towns, until he was in 1749 called to Exeter, where he spent the rest of his life, and established a reputation as an able and zealous Non-conformist. He published in 1737 a spirited little pamphlet, entitled *High-flown Episcopal and Priestly Claims Freely Examined*, which earned for him many thanks for this service to religious liberty, and brought him into correspondence with two of the early liberals in New England, Jonathan Mayhew and Charles Chauncy of Boston, where one of his writings was thrice reprinted. A few years after this the Rev. John White of St. John's College, Cambridge, made a virulent attack on the Dissenters in *Letters to a Gentleman Dissenting from the Church of England* (London 1743 ff). To these Towgood replied in *The Dissenting Gentleman's Letters in Answer to Mr. White* (1745 ff), a distinguished controversial writing which became the standard work on Non-conformity.⁵⁷

In 1749, already an Arian in belief, Towgood was called to Exeter to the church from which Peirce had been ejected; and here his in-

⁵⁶ Cf. memoir by Philip Taylor, *Universal Theological Magazine*, II (1804), 1-7, *Monthly Repository*, VIII (1813), 3, 87-91; Turner, *Eminent Unitarians*, I, 299-346.

⁵⁷ Abridged (London, 1772), as *A Calm and Plain Answer to the Inquiry, Why are you a Dissenter?*

fluence so broadened the congregation that before his death it had re-absorbed the Arian Mint Meeting. Already in 1753, largely through his influence, the Exeter Assembly had voted to accept candidates for ordination who refused to declare their faith in the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit. In 1756 Bishop Secker of Oxford in his charge to the clergy had seriously deplored the growing skepticism of the age and the increasing neglect of religion. Towgood took occasion therefore to address to him a public letter, entitled *Serious and Free Thoughts on the Present State of the Church*, in which he pointed out, as one cause of the growth of the infidelity complained of, 'a general apprehension that the clergy themselves are not thoroughly persuaded of the truth and importance of the truth and importance of the Christian Religion, inasmuch as they solemnly subscribe Articles, which they do not really believe; and declare publicly, in God's presence, their unfeigned Assent and Consent to forms, in divine worship, which they highly disapprove; perhaps, heartily condemn'.⁵⁸ When a new academy was opened at Exeter in 1760, Towgood became one of its tutors, and served thus until it ceased in 1771, but he continued his ministry until 1782, when he resigned after more than sixty years of service, though he lived for ten years more. Joseph Priestley was invited to succeed him, but did not accept the call.⁵⁹

What has been said of these few outstanding leaders in the liberal Dissenting churches in the eighteenth century may enable us to take the measure of the part these churches played in the religious, intellectual and general public life of the time. Their ministers in general far outstripped those of the other Dissenting churches in ability and scholarship, as their laity also did in culture, wealth and social influence, and in public life and public service. But their churches as a body were not united in any organization for effective spreading of their principles or for extending their borders. They had no acknowledged leader and no accepted plan for the future, and they were not increasing in numbers or strength. In short, they were like a ship that has out-ridden a heavy storm and reached calm waters, but is now hardly more

⁵⁸ *Op cit*, p. 300, appended to Towgood's *A Dissent from the Church of England fully Justified*, etc., ed. 4 (Boston, 1768), and separately (London, 1777), p. 7. Also cited in Manning's *Sketch infra*, p. 62.

⁵⁹ Cf. James Manning *Sketch of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Micajah Towgood* (Exeter, 1762), Turner, *Eminent Unitarians*, 1, 391-417, *Protestant Dissenter's Magazine* (London), 1 (1794), 385-392.

than drifting, with no captain at the helm, and no definite port in view. The chances were that the movement would in a generation or two quietly fade away unless it could have guidance from wise and clear-sighted leaders, and become conscious of a distinctive contribution to make to the religious life of the time. In the preceding chapters we have tried to trace the long and slow course through which the pioneers and precursors of our movement struggled on toward greater freedom in religious thought and worship. We have now arrived at the point where the movement will become conscious of its mission, will accept the guidance of competent leaders, and will organize its forces for greater strength and more effective action. The next two chapters will be concerned with this transformation of an undefined movement into a definite organization.

CHAPTER XV

UNITARIANS SECEDE FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. THEOPHILUS LINDSEY

AFTER DR. CLARKE had relapsed into silence in 1712, and the controversy over Arian subscription had quieted down ten years later, public agitation over the Church's formulas was apparently at an end. Despite Waterland's insistence upon literal conformity, those that had shown opposition to the accepted standards evidently found ways of interpretation that they could use without too heavy reproaches of conscience. Beneath the placid surface, however, there must still have been many that were not at peace with themselves, though they could see no safe way of escape from the dilemma in which they stood. For at ordination, or upon elevation to a higher station in the Church, a clergyman was still required to acknowledge and subscribe 'all and every the Articles as agreeable to the Word of God,' and before entering upon a living he must promise, 'I do declare that I will conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England as it is now by law established.' Though such vows and promises might be ignored, they could not be wholly forgotten. A clergyman who was in a position to know as well as any one estimated that not more than one fifth of the clergy subscribed in a strict sense.¹ They continued notwithstanding publicly to use the Prayer Book as before, and privately to object to its contents as before. Whiston, indeed, had a generation before urged Convocation to modify the liturgy, though his plea fell on deaf ears. Dr. Clarke had even gone so far as privately to revise his own copy by altering its phrases in some places, and altogether omitting the Athanasian Creed and some other passages; but the Bishops made no sign. The matter was much discussed in personal conversation, and there was wide agreement that something ought to

¹ Cf. Francis Blackburne, *The Confessional*, ed. 1 (London, 1766), p. 30. Bishop Burnet complained (*History of his own Time*, Oxford, 1823, vi, 172), that the greater part subscribed the Articles without ever examining them, and that others did it because they must do it, though they could hardly satisfy their consciences about some things in them.

be done, yet no one was ready to take leadership of any concerted movement. Though no doubt there lay in many minds the unexpressed hope that a way might be opened for some much desired doctrinal revisions, yet it was at the outset not a question of amending the doctrines of the Church, but simply one of making certain minor revisions of language, making some obviously desirable omissions, and ceasing to require subscription to everything that the Prayer Book contained.

The silence was at length broken in 1749 by an anonymous work entitled *Free and Candid Disquisitions relating to the Church of England*.² The book was very modest in tone and temperate in spirit, proposing no more than a new translation of the Bible, and certain amendments in the Liturgy that would free it of some objections and make it more acceptable to worshipers. Most of the suggestions offered had in fact already been made by others, but they were here collected and supported by quotations from leaders honored in the Church. It was the first serious attempt at a revision of the position of the Church since the Act of Toleration, and it aroused great interest, and began a discussion that lasted for more than twenty years. The work was answered by various writers of the High Church party, who on principle opposed any effort for revision, being apprehensive to what dangerous lengths changes, however desirable in themselves, might go if once the door were opened; but it was ably defended in *An Apology for the Authors of the Free and Candid Disquisitions* (1751) by the Rev. Francis Blackburne who, as we shall presently see, was soon to lead a movement for abolishing subscription to the Articles and Liturgy. As the abolition of subscription had thus been modestly advocated in the *Disquisitions*, Dr. Robert Clayton (1695-1758), Bishop of Clogher in Ireland, now gave fresh impulse to the movement by publishing an *Essay on Spirit* (1751), which exhaustively discussed the doctrine of the Trinity in the light of Scripture, reason, and the Fathers, with especial reference to the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

² The authorship was not avowed, but it was long afterwards discovered that the compiler and editor was John Jones, Vicar of Alconbury in Huntingdonshire. He had been a student of Carmarthen College and was a patron of it. Cf. *Monthly Repository*, II (1807), 349. The work was carefully summarized in a series of papers in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, XI (1749-50), 413-415, 437-439, cf. also 416, 508-510, 539 f., 547-550. In the following year it was supplemented by *An Appeal to Common Reason and Candor*, by the same author.

In a long and fine preface he favored revision of the Book of Common Prayer, discussed subscription, heresy, etc., and coming finally to the Athanasian Creed denounced it as incomprehensible and condemnatory, and the occasion of much offence.³ Ere long he became evidently an Antitrinitarian, if indeed he had not already been one; and in 1756 he made in the Irish House of Lords a speech in favor of omitting the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds from the Liturgy.⁴ As his attacks upon the Trinity still continued, the authorities two years later were about to prosecute him, which would probably have ended in removal from his see, when he suddenly died.

The writings above mentioned aroused wide controversy. Numerous prints appeared, some urging the need of revision and of abolishing subscription, others violently resisting all change and defending the status quo. Some of the Bishops, who had earlier showed liberal leanings, now became stiffly reactionary; and at least one of the parish clergy was presented for omitting to read the Athanasian Creed. But though several of even the Bishops were thought to be more or less unsound as to the doctrine of the Trinity,⁵ no one in authority made any effective move to mend matters. Hence when members of the clergy grew restless over the situation, some of them resorted to various expedients in order to quiet the reproach of their consciences. Although the more timid simply held their peace, smothered their compunctions, and continued to read the prescribed forms as an unavoidable necessity, others quietly omitted the parts they did not approve, or had them read by the parish clerk. One is said to have flaunted his disrespect for the Creed by having it sung to a popular hunting tune; while another is related to have prefaced the reading by saying, 'Brethren, this is the Creed of St. Athanasius; but God forbid that it should be the creed of any other man.' A rare few being complained of may have been admonished or lightly disciplined by the Archbishop; still, so long as no public scandal was created, the

³ Though it was allowed to pass under his name, since he had signed the introduction to it, it is said to have been the work of a young clergyman in his diocese. It was ably answered by Archdeacon Randolph of Oxford, in *A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity from . . . an Essay on Spirit* (Oxford, 1754). Cf. Sparks, *Collection of Essays*, vi, 237-263; Hunt, *Religious Thought*, iii, 303-308.

⁴ Cf. Sparks, *Unitarian Miscellany* (Baltimore), *loc. cit.*, and i, 59-68; *Christian Reformer*, vii (1821), 217-228.

⁵ Cf. Abbey and Overton, *English Church*, i, 515 n.

Bishops had little mind to disturb the peace of the Church by calling offenders to account, and of all the clergy of the period only one ventured to go beyond the stage of mere discussion and take what should have been clearly indicated as the next step

The one to do this, and thus to win from Lindsey, who later followed his example, the name of 'father of Unitarian nonconformity,' was the Rev William Robertson (1705-83), rector of a parish at Rathvilly, Ireland.⁶ He had been an early pupil of Francis Hutcheson at Dublin Academy, had taken his degree at Glasgow, and after a short ministry as a Presbyterian took orders in the Church. The publication of *Free and Candid Disquisitions* in 1749 confirmed in him misgivings that he had probably long been entertaining, and he therefore omitted the Athanasian Creed and other passages in the conduct of worship, thus giving some offence. He then laid his scruples before his Bishop, and having waited several years with no reply, he gave up flattering material advantages and alluring prospects, resigned his preferments in 1764 (a brave step to take at 60, with a wife and 21 children), and spent the rest of his life in obscure poverty at Wolverhampton at a pitifully low salary as teacher of a grammar school. Ten years later his example was a powerful incentive to Lindsey to take a similar step, as will soon be related. After two years, being now free from bonds, he published a notable little book, *An Attempt to explain the Words Reason, Substance, Person, Creeds, Subscription, etc.*⁷ It was a temperately written work, which gave convincing reasons for hesitating to subscribe definitely to terms in meaning and use so indefinite, thus making clear to his friends his grounds for taking a step so unprejudiced; while it also doubtless had a certain influence upon the handful of the clergy who a few years later also withdrew from the Church. Out of a large number of the clergy of his time that were ill at ease in their use of the Liturgy, he is conspicuous as the only one that disregarded the cost and withdrew from his ministry in the Church. Though henceforth ostracized and shunned by most of his late brethren, yet he was held in high honor and reverence not only by the Dissenters but

⁶ Cf. Theophilus Lindsey, *Apology*, closing paragraph, do, *Historical View*, p. 477 f. sketch of Robertson's life by John Disney, *Gentleman's Magazine*, lxxi (1783), 745-750; by Joshua Toulmin, *Monthly Repository*, i (1806), 169, 225 f.; Turner, *Eminent Unitarians* II, 5-24; Thomas Belsham, *Memoirs of Theophilus Lindsey* (London, 1812) pp. 44-46.

⁷ Anonymous. The best edition is ed. 3, 1767, with his signed letter to his Bishop in 1760.

also by not a few in the Church who had felt his scruples yet could not bring themselves to follow his example.

Though the governors of the Church gave no sign, yet increasing uneasiness existed beneath the surface; and this feeling at length found vigorous expression in *The Confessional*, a work published by a clergyman holding a high position in the Church, which has been judged to be 'one of the most important books issued in England in the eighteenth century, if it be estimated by the amount of discussion that it created.'⁸ The author, the Rev. Francis Blackburne (1705-87), had taken his degree at Cambridge in 1727, but as he was a disciple of Locke, and as a friend of Priestley had sent his son to Warrington Academy, and was already marked as a liberal, he received no preferment until 1739, when he became rector of Richmond in northern Yorkshire, where he was diligent in his office and remained for 48 years, his only living.⁹ He was of a liberal mind in theology, in general sympathy with the position of Dr. Clarke, though he took no open part in the discussions about the Trinity, having early in life resolved to have as little as possible to do with that matter. But he had become much interested in the question about subscription; and in 1749, when the *Free and Candid Disquisitions* above mentioned appeared and was violently attacked by the conservative clergy, Blackburne, though its 'milky phraseology' seemed to him quite too mild, defended it earnestly in an *Apology for the Authors of the Free and Candid Disquisitions* (1750), his first controversial work. In the same year, when he was appointed Archdeacon to Cleveland, a district in north-east Yorkshire, he had indeed serious scruples about resubscribing the Articles, though he was persuaded to do so on the principle advocated by Dr. Clarke. Reconsidering the subject later, he determined never to subscribe again, and having made extended studies in this field, he wrote his famous work, *The Confessional; or, a Full and free Inquiry into the Right, Utility, Edification, and Success of establishing Systematic Confessions of Faith and Doctrine in Protestant Churches*. After holding this in manuscript for several years, he at length published it, anonymously, in 1766.¹⁰

⁸ Cf. Colligan, *Arian Movement*, p. 117, and note.

⁹ Cf. his life, prefixed to his *Works* (Cambridge, 1804), vol. i (portrait).

¹⁰ Later, enlarged editions in 1767 and 1770; also in his *Works*, vol. v; also Dutch translation. The work was generously patronized by Thomas Hollis, whose life he afterwards wrote.

In this work Blackburne thoroughly investigated the origin and development of using human confessions of faith as tests of orthodoxy, instead of taking Scripture as the sole authority in religion. He denied the right of churches to impose such tests at all, pointed out the evils that result from subscribing in any but the plain literal sense, and concluded that, in the interest of simple moral honesty, compulsory subscription to the Articles ought to be abolished. A great clamor at once arose among the clergy. The Archbishop, hotly incensed at the author, soon ferreted him out, and from being hitherto considered moderate now became stiffly reactionary, and many of the clergy followed his lead; but by many others the work was heartily approved for saying openly what they had felt secretly. Numerous attacks and rejoinders, signed or unsigned, appeared in print during the violent controversy that ensued.¹¹ It had naturally been suspected that, in view of the treatment he was receiving and the certainty that he would have no further preferment, Blackburne would now resign from the Church; and as Dr. Chandler of the church in Old Jewry, London, had just died, he was invited to succeed him at a very tempting salary. But he had long before faced and settled with himself the question of possible resignation, and found his devotion and reverence for the Church too deep to make such an action thinkable.¹²

Blackburne's authorship of *The Confessional* naturally caused him to be looked to for leadership in any movement for carrying its principles into effect; for even before that was published application had been made to the governors of the Church for reform of the Liturgy agreeable to the Scripture standard, though they declined to take any action, on the ground that the matter was entirely in the hands of the civil powers. But a year or two later the Rev. Francis Stone, Rector of Cold Norton, Essex, already an Arian, believing that Athanasians were

¹¹ Cf. Hunt, *Religious Thought*, III, 308-313; see also (anonymously compiled by Blackburne) *A Collection of Letters and Essays in favor of Public Liberty*, etc. (London, 1774). *Gentleman's Magazine*, xli (1771), 405-407; xlii (1772), 263-265, gives a considerable list of writings in this controversy; but the completest bibliography is that compiled by Dr. John Disney, *A Short View of the Controversies occasioned by the Confessional and the Petition to Parliament*, etc. (London, 1773), in two parts. It comprises 110 titles which, together with 26 more, are all bound up in the 14 volumes of Disney's personal collection of *Clerical Petition Tracts* in Dr. Williams's Library, London, prefaced by a brief review of the whole matter, with names of the speakers in the debate in Parliament and of the members that voted for the petition.

¹² Cf. his sermon in 1753, in his *Works*, I, 197-202.

equalled or outnumbered by liberals of various sorts, proposed in a published tract¹³ that a society be formed in London for securing from Parliament abolition of subscription, which many of the clergy had come earnestly to desire. After counsel taken with Blackburne and several others most interested, proposals for a petition to Parliament were prepared by Blackburne and widely circulated; in response to which a meeting of supporters was called and held at the Feathers Tavern in the Strand,¹⁴ July 17, 1771. The meeting was attended by numerous neighboring clergymen, and graduates of both Universities in arts, divinity, law and medicine. Stone presided, and an organization of the Feathers Tavern Association was effected. Though most of the Bishops discouraged the plan, some honestly believed that Bishops and clergy in general sympathized with their purpose, and a committee was appointed to draw up a petition. This was written by Blackburne,¹⁵ and was unanimously approved and signed at a meeting on September 25. The petition was then personally circulated among the clergy, and every effort was made to get as many signatures as possible. Meanwhile from those that had learned what was afoot or were concerned in it, an amazing flood of writings came out, in newspapers and in tracts, from which it was evident that favor for the movement was by no means so general and earnest as had been presumed, and that opposi-

¹³ *A Short and Seasonable Application to the Public, etc.*, by Tyro Theologus, A.M. (London, 1768). The author presently became openly Unitarian in his beliefs, though retaining his living, maintaining that he was within his rights; and for nearly forty years he was left undisturbed. But in 1806 he preached and published a sermon denying that Christ was God or was miraculously born. Complaint was made, and in 1808 he was prosecuted in the church courts for heresy and blasphemy, was adjudged guilty, and when 72 years of age with a wife and seven dependent children, was deprived of his living. His case excited wide sympathy, and the Unitarians of his time organized relief for him. He died 1813. Cf. *Monthly Repository*, III (1808), 274-277, 282-284; also his tract, *An Unitarian Christian Minister's Plea for adherence to the Church of England, etc.* (London, 1808).

¹⁴ For the text of the proposals see Blackburne's *Works*, VII, 1-12, cf. vol. I, p. XI. Of the several Feathers Taverns that first or last existed in or near the Strand, the one that seems most likely was that opposite St. Clement Danes, probably on the south side between Arundel and Essex Streets.

¹⁵ Text in Blackburne, *Works*, VII, 13-19; cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, xli (1771), 599-601; xlii (1772), 61-63. For a list of the 197 clerical signers, cf. *Monthly Repository*, xiii (1818), 15-18; also Theophilus Lindsey, *Vindiciae Priestleianae* (London, 1788), p. 47 f. Priestley was informed (cf. his *Works*, I, 1, 144) that only 24 were present, with Lindsey in the chair. He circulated the petition not only in Yorkshire, but also in Essex and in the West of England (*loc. cit.*). For a contemporary account of proceedings, cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 144-163.

tion to it would be strong and determined. In view of the tide of general sympathy supposed to exist, the results of the efforts to secure wide personal support for the movement were disappointing. A devoted friend of the cause¹⁶ who spent two or three months in trying to secure signatures, and traveled over 2,000 miles in Yorkshire over the muddy roads of autumn, obtained hardly more than a score of names. He found most of the clergy indifferent, and the bigoted violent in their opposition, while many that were privately sympathetic, and would have been glad to sign had they dared, were reluctant to give their superiors offence by public support. Thus the total number of signatures obtained was less than 250, clergy and laity together, though of these not a few were of persons of the highest standing, including the Master and all the resident fellows of Jesus College, Cambridge.

While the petition was still in circulation a large number of other clergy, thinking it better procedure to appeal first to the governors of the Church, proposed a petition to the Bishops; but when they cautiously sent to sound them out in advance, the reply was that in the opinion of the Bench there was neither prudence nor safety in granting the relief in question, as having a manifest tendency to endanger the public peace and even the very existence of the established Church.¹⁷ The government, fearing that political trouble might be stirred up, planned to have the petition deferred as soon as presented, and thus smothered; but this plan fell through, and the petition was introduced on February 6, 1772, and was ably debated for eight hours by nearly thirty members on both sides, to be finally rejected by a vote of 217 to 71.¹⁸

The opposition maintained that the measure was unnecessary; that the whole matter was trivial and frivolous; that it was the work of agitators and malcontents; that it would corrupt the Church by admitting to its ministry all manner of heretics and unbelievers; and that it was designed only as an opening wedge whose ultimate purpose was simply

¹⁶ The Rev. Theophilus Lindsey, soon to be spoken of at length. Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 48-50.

¹⁷ Cf. Hunt, *Religious Thought*, iii, 313 n.; Blackburne, *Works*, vii, 37; Lindsey, *Apology*, p. 2; *id.*, *Vindiciae*, p. 51 f.

¹⁸ Cf. *Parliamentary History of England* (London, 1813), xvii, 245-295; *Annual Register for 1772* (London, 1885), xv, 86*-89*, 72, 171-173; *Gentleman's Magazine*, xlii (1772), 61; Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 53-67. Names of the debaters and of those voting for the petition are given in Disney's *Short View* mentioned above, p. vii.

to undermine and overthrow the Church. But the reason underlying all others was the fear that the stability of the national Church would be weakened, and the door be opened for no one could say what unknown changes and evils. That its true purpose was the honest one of removing a stumbling-block for men of scrupulous conscience, loving the Church and wishing to serve in its ministry, was hardly taken into account. Outside of Parliament generous support was given by the liberal Dissenters, but among the Methodists and in the orthodox party in the Church, and even not a few of the latitudinarian type, opposition was strong.¹⁹ At the next session of Parliament an application was again made, in which the petitioners asked, instead of subscribing the Articles, to be allowed to make the following declaration:— 'We declare as in the presence of Almighty God, that we believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a revelation of the mind and will of God, and that we receive them as the Rule of our Faith and practice.'²⁰ Yet after another long debate the petition was again rejected by a large majority, 159 to 64, February 18, 1773.²¹ The debate in Parliament led, however, to one indirect result, in that the terms of subscription at the Universities were somewhat relaxed; and a further consequence in the direction of freedom was that in 1779 Dissenters, after two defeats, were relieved from subscription to the Articles as a condition of enjoying toleration. Soon after this second defeat the Feathers Tavern Association ceased its efforts and disbanded. Nevertheless at the next session of Parliament a third attempt was made to secure relief; but after debate the motion was rejected without division, by an overwhelming majority, May 5, 1774.²²

Not long afterwards Blackburne published extensive and somewhat bitter *Reflections on the Fate of a Petition*, etc., and he further defended himself against reproaches for his course in *Four Discourses*²³ but at this point he disappears from our view, though he continued his ministry in the Church until his death in 1787. After the failure of their

¹⁹ Cf. Hunt, *Religious Thought*, iii, 399.

²⁰ Cf. Colligan, *Arian Movement*, p. 118.

²¹ Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, xliii (1773), 260-263, 363-365.

²² Cf. Herbert McLachlan, *Letters of Theophilus Lindsey* (Manchester, 1920), p. 49 ff; *Parliamentary History*, *ut supra*, pp. 1325-1327; Lindsey, *Vindiciae*, pp. xi and 51. Entire abolition of tests was not accomplished until 1901, by Gladstone's government; cf. McLachlan, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

²³ For the former, cf. his *Works*, vii, 33 ff; for the latter, *ibid.*, iv, 261-304.

petition, four of the signers soon resigned their preferments and withdrew from the Church, to be followed within a few years by one or two more. All the rest, despite their predicament, remained as they were. We have now to leave them in oblivion, and to take up the brave story of Theophilus Lindsey who, disregarding all protests and entreaties from his friends in the ministry and in his parish, resigned his charge in November, 1773, and thus became the sole one of the 200 or more petitioners to leave a significant mark on the religion of his time, and whose name is still held in honor and reverence.²⁴

Theophilus Lindsey²⁵ was born in 1723 at Middlewich, Cheshire, the son of a mercer and of a lady of gentle birth. He was a serious minded and studious youth, and in due time entered St John's College, Cambridge, where he took his degrees with distinction, and became fellow in 1747. After ordination he first became curate of a small chapel in London, but was soon chosen chaplain to the Duke of Somerset, for whose grandson he was for two years tutor and traveling companion on the Continent. Returning to England he became rector of a church at Kirkby Wiske in Yorkshire, but a few miles from Archdeacon Blackburne at Richmond, in whom he found a congenial spirit and a valued friend, but after three years he was persuaded to resign and take the living at Piddletown in Dorset in 1756. In this large and neglected parish he spent seven years, happy in the various services of a parish priest, from which the alluring invitation to become chaplain to the newly appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with the virtual certainty of rising to the seat of Bishop, did not tempt him. It was while here that he was married in 1760 to Blackburne's step daughter, a lady of shrewd mind and quick intelligence, firm in judgment and decisive in action, who was heartily to aid him in all his work and to

²⁴ It deserves recording here that it was not until nearly a hundred years later that Parliament in 1865 was persuaded to make a slight modification in the terms of subscription, so that one need only assent in general terms to the Articles and the Book of Common Prayer and declare one's belief that the doctrine therein is agreeable to the word of God. Two years later a Royal Commission took up the matter of the Athanasian Creed which many wished removed. A petition signed by all the prominent High Churchmen and by over 1,200 clergy and laity protested against any change, Liddon and Pusey declaring that they would leave the Church if any change were made. The Creed was retained. Cf. Francis Warre Cornish, *The English Church in the Nineteenth Century* (London 1910), II, 160-166.

²⁵ Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*; Lindsey, *Apology* pp. 202-223; Catharine Cappe 'Memoir of Lindsey,' *Monthly Repository* III (1808), 637-642, IV (1809), 1-5; McLachlan, *Letters*; Gordon, *Addresses*; Turner, *Eminent Unitarians*, II, 25-81.

bear without complaint the trials and sacrifices that were to face them²⁶

Early in this period religious doubts began to stir in Lindsey's mind. It was not now the question of subscription that troubled him, but doubts about the Trinity. He had not read Socinus, though he had apparently seen one of Nye's Unitarian tracts, but he set himself to serious study of the teaching of Scripture on this matter. His mind moved rapidly, and passing Arianism by he soon came to believe in the humanity of Christ. This raised in turn the question whether the offering of prayers to Christ were not then practical idolatry. While thus uncertain in his mind he eagerly accepted the chance to return to the north, where he and his wife might be near Blackburne and many old friends, and accept the vicarage of Catterick only a few miles from Richmond, and removed thither in 1763. For a time he managed to content himself with the Sabellian explanation of the Trinity that Wallis had made acceptable two generations before, though he determined that he would never again subscribe, but would end his days in this quiet parish. With this understanding with himself he entered upon his work with such uncommon vigor and zeal that people called him a Methodist. Happy to be in a calling that he deemed ideal in its opportunities for doing good, he not only preached twice each Sunday practical, helpful sermons on plain Bible truths, avoiding the controversial questions that occupied so many preachers; but had every other Sunday afternoon a class of a hundred boys from the village school for Bible lessons, and every Sunday evening classes alternately for young men and young women. This was in 1764, sixteen years before Robert Raikes established at Gloucester what has been called the first Sunday school.²⁷ He was also unwearied in his pastoral relations to his large flock, and especially devoted to the aged, the many poor, and the sick. He set up charity schools for poor children, gave money to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and from his own supplies provided medicines for the sick, whom his wife devotedly nursed. To do all this he was bound to live with the greatest frugality, and was unable to lay aside any part of his slender income.

Despite his happy absorption in the work of his parish, Lindsey grew

²⁶ Cf. Robert Spears *Record of Unitarian Worthies* (London, 1876), pp. 133-136; Memoir by Catharine Cappe *Monthly Repository* vii (1812), 109-118.

²⁷ Cf. Overton and Relton, *The English Church, 1714-1800* (London, 1906), vii, 300; Catharine Cappe *Memoirs of her Life* (London, 1822), p. 118 f.

steadily less at peace in his own conscience. A year after his settling at Catterick, Robertson resigned his ministry in Ireland, at the cost of incalculable sacrifice, and this fact, together with his publication two or three years later, smote Lindsey's conscience heavily, by pointing out clearly the step that he himself must soon take.²⁸ For it had become increasingly clear to him that, even if he might get along with a revised interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity, yet he could not with honor either modify the Liturgy to meet his own ideas, or use it as it was; and that hence he must soon resign from the Church. While he was still hesitating to take the crucial step, he had the fortune to meet at Blackburne's house at Richmond early in 1769 two persons with whom he found himself in warm sympathy, both ministers in important Dissenting churches, Joseph Priestley, who had lately come to Leeds from the Academy at Warrington, and William Turner of Wakefield. He confided his case to them, and was at first advised to stay where he was, make such changes in the Liturgy as he thought fit, and leave the result to his superiors. In this advice Blackburne concurred. But many as were the considerations that tempted him, he could not reconcile them to his conscience. The example of the ejected clergy of a hundred years before and of Dr. Robertson recently, constantly reproached him.

While he was thus on the verge of resignation a movement began that promised to provide him a possible escape, the movement that resulted in the Feathers Tavern petition. Lindsey had from the start little expectation that the appeal to Parliament would be successful, still less that it would solve his particular problem, but nevertheless he threw himself into the movement with great earnestness. As we have seen, the petition of the clergy was hopelessly defeated, and Lindsey therefore determined to carry out his resolution and resign his office at the end of the year. He communicated his purpose to some of his closest friends, who listened with incredulity that he should consider such a crazy move. He told of it to Blackburne, who remonstrated vehemently, foreseeing that his defection would undermine the work of the petitioners, and who for three or four years refused all communication with him;²⁹ and at length in November he sent the Bishop his resignation.³⁰

²⁸ *v. supra*, pp. 273-275.

²⁹ Cf. McLachlan, *Letters*, p. 107.

³⁰ Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, p. 500.

Lindsey's friends among the clergy now held aloof from him; but his wife, on whom the sacrifices involved must have fallen most heavily, stood loyally by him throughout, and she indignantly refused the offer of a comfortable home provided she would leave her husband. Up to the day of their leaving they continued their devoted service to their parishioners, successfully seeing them through an onset of small-pox, in which not one patient was lost. Meantime interested friends (though not in the Church) tried to look out for their future. It was proposed that Lindsey should fill the vacant pulpit of the Octagon Chapel in Liverpool,³¹ or that of the Octagon Chapel at Norwich; and he might also have had, at a handsome salary and with abundant leisure, a post as librarian for a noble Earl. But his purpose was already fixed, to gather out of the Church a congregation of those that desired a pure Unitarian form of worship, and he chose to make the experiment in London.³² He therefore broke up his home and, since he had saved nothing out of his living at Catterick, feeling bound to expend the whole income of the parish for the needs of the parishioners, he was forced to meet his immediate needs by selling his furniture, plate, linen and china, while he sent his valuable library to a large town, where it fetched less than £40. He preached his final sermon to grief-stricken congregations, left a printed message for his people,³³ and set out to face a world in which old friends now turned their backs upon him, of whom not one offered him any assistance or support.

It was a serious venture for one to take at fifty, with no certain future, and with no resources save the petty sum his sales had brought, and his wife's income of only £20 a year. But he was light-hearted, for his conscience was clear, his aim definite, and his faith strong. The pilgrims proceeded toward London by easy stages, stopping at six or

³¹ This chapel was built in 1763 to provide liturgical worship both for Dissenters that might prefer it, and for many of the established Church who complained of the Book of Common Prayer, but were repelled by the extemporaneous prayers of the Dissenters. But few of the latter were attracted, and the liturgy proposed was bitterly criticized both by churchmen and by Dr John Taylor of the neighboring Warrington Academy. Numbers fell off, the liturgy was discarded, and after thirteen years the chapel was closed. Cf. *A Form of Prayer for the use of a congregation of Protestant Dissenters in Liverpool* (London, 1763), John Taylor, *The Scripture Account of Prayer*, ed. 2 (London, 1762); *Monthly Repository* viii (1813) 625-627, *Christian Reformer*, N S x (1854), 232-235; Colligan, *Arian Movement* p 113.

³² David Williams (1738-1815), who had left the Dissenting ministry for his humanitarian views, projected a movement like Lindsey's, but it came to nothing.

³³ *A Farewell Address to the Parishioners of Catterick* (London, 1733).

seven places for short visits on old friends. At Swinderby in Lincolnshire they visited Dr. John Disney, who had been one of the Feathers Tavern Association, and was soon to marry Mrs. Lindsey's half-sister, as well as later to be his colleague and successor in London. It was here that he first saw a copy of the Prayer Book containing the alterations proposed by Dr. Clarke, which he forthwith copied for later use.³⁴

As they approached their destination Lindsey finished the formal statement with which he meant to follow his *Farewel Address*.³⁵ In this work his aim was not so much to justify himself for the action he had taken, as to lead the readers to look with intelligent charity upon those that were ill at ease in the worship of the Church. To this end he gave a sketch of how the doctrine of the Trinity arose and developed and was supported by force; likewise of the growth of the Unitarian view and the violent means used to suppress it; of the true worship of God alone and the corruption of the pure Christian religion by notions of pagan philosophy, and the way to restore true Christian worship. Finally there was a candid relation of the author's own experience. The whole was drawn up with great care, and temperately written in fine spirit. It immediately reached a wide public, and within a year or so ran to a fourth edition. In this work Lindsey had not said all that he wished to say, for fear of being too diffuse, so that two years later he supplemented it with a further work,³⁶ in which, after taking due notice of several treatises that had been published against the *Apology*,³⁷ he discussed with scholarly thoroughness the chief passages of Scripture and the early Fathers bearing on the doctrine of Christ. This book of sound learning was the most elaborate of all Lindsey's writings.³⁸

The Lindseys reached London early in January, 1774, and after taking shelter with friends for a week or two found temporary humble lodgings on the ground floor just off Holborn, where they had almost no furniture, and in order to buy needed supplies had to sell what

³⁴ These alterations Lindsey recorded in his *Apology*, ed. 4, pp 185-192

³⁵ *The Apology of Theophilus Lindsey*.

³⁶ *A Sequel to the Apology on Resigning the Vicarage of Catterick, Yorkshire* (London, 1775)

³⁷ William Burgh, *A Scriptural Confutation of the . . . Apology* (Dublin, 1775), George Bingham, *A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Church of England* (Oxford 1774), Thomas Randolph, *A Vindication of the Worship of the Son* (Oxford, 1775).

³⁸ Sufficiently summarized in Belsham's *Life of Lindsey*, pp 129-134.

plate they had left. Malicious rumors had already begun to fly censuring Lindsey's character and conduct. Though some offered him their services and help in his new venture, while others, chiefly Dissenters, subscribed to it liberally, yet few of his former friends now visited him, while some spoke strongly in disapproval. However, a sum was soon obtained large enough for expenses of the movement for two years, and preparations were made for fitting up for use as a temporary chapel a room in Essex Street which had been used for book auctions, and had been discovered after long search. With these obstacles out of the way Lindsey now began, with the counsel of experienced friends, to draw up a reformed liturgy, based upon Dr. Clarke's plan, though going somewhat further than that,³⁹ that it might be ready for use at the opening service in the new chapel. There were rumors that the civil power might interfere; but no threats deterred him, and fears proved groundless, though it was known that for some time an agent of the government attended the services to make sure that nothing illegal was attempted. The justices, however, did at first demur about granting the chapel a license.

The first service, which was not publicly advertised, was held on April 17, 1774,⁴⁰ with an attendance of about 200, mostly members of the Church of England. Several clergymen were present, several Dissenting ministers, one Lord, and the American, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, who was then in London in the interest of the American Colonies. He had already formed a friendship with Lindsey, and worshiped here as long as he remained in England. The preacher discarded the customary surplice, and his sermon dwelt on preserving a harmonious and peaceable spirit in religion; while he pledged himself to avoid bringing matters of controversy into his pulpit — a promise that it was later sometimes found difficult to keep. The chapel was often crowded,

³⁹ Lindsey did not propose to make needless alterations in the Book of Common Prayer, but besides the important ones above noted, he was in the interest of sincerity led to make sundry minor corrections, and in later editions some further changes were introduced, some antique expressions were modernized, and a few of the Psalms were omitted. The Apostles' Creed was retained until the fourth edition in 1793 (cf. Belsham's *Life of Lindsey*, pp 336-341). It may be recalled that a little more than a century before the Antitrinitarians in Poland emphasized their adherence to this Creed as the authentic standard of the Christian faith.

⁴⁰ This date may fairly be taken as the beginning of permanently organized Unitarianism in England, though the earlier ephemeral movements of Biddle, Emlyn, Sayer Rudd or any others that took no firm root are not overlooked.

and support was given by many persons of influence, statesmen, scholars, public men and officers of the government. Indeed, it was whispered that Lindsey had a salary of £400 a year though in fact he was still forced to practice closest economy, and was unable even to maintain a modest private residence. After more than a year his total income was but £100.⁴¹

After three years of encouraging growth the permanence of the movement seemed assured; but the old auction-room was clearly outgrown, so that the need of more satisfactory accommodations was acutely felt. It was therefore determined to purchase the Essex Street property and remodel it into a commodious chapel, with the minister's residence on the ground floor. Generous contributions were made by friends from near and far, and the new chapel was opened for worship March 29, 1778.⁴² The congregation was hardly settled in its new home, with an habitual attendance that well filled it, when Lindsey was stricken in the autumn of 1778 with a serious fever, which for a time gravely endangered his life. This gave new emphasis to a need that he had felt almost from the beginning, of a colleague to share his steadily increasing labors, but it was still several years before he succeeded in finding an acceptable one. Though he had early made earnest efforts to find a suitable person among the signers of the Feathers Tavern Petition, the right man was not easily found. He preferred of course one that like himself had withdrawn from the Church; but the names to be considered were few. His first hope was to persuade the Rev. John Jebb⁴³ (1736-86), but he had been persuaded to devote himself to medicine.

⁴¹ In the first half-year contributions of about £400 had been received, but more than half of this had gone for renting and fitting up the chapel. Cf. McLachlan, *Letters*, p. 23.

⁴² The remodeled and enlarged chapel was continuously used for worship until 1885 though for some time attendance had seriously declined, and for the last four years there was no regular minister. The Essex Church then acquired new premises and built a handsome church building in Kensington (1887), the chapel property was acquired for the purposes of denominational headquarters by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association and the Sunday School Association (1886). The large assembly-room was reserved for large gatherings, and the rest of the building was remodeled and was used for offices and bookrooms until 1944, when enemy action rendered the whole building unfit for further service, and the headquarters were transferred to University Hall in Gordon Square. Cf. 'Essex Hall, Past and Present,' *Christian Life*, xxxix (1913), 216A.

⁴³ Jebb was perhaps the most prominent among half a score of Cambridge men who are sometimes ranked as Unitarian confessors. He was a brilliant student, took his two degrees, in due time was elected Fellow, and took orders in the Church. At the Uni-

Lindsey next sought Dr. William Robertson, whose example fifteen years before had so strongly moved him to leave the Church; but after he had agreed to come an unexpected emergency caused him to decline, and to continue in his poor post of teacher at Wolverhampton.⁴⁴ He also appealed in vain to the Rev. James Lambert, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. At length when about to give up his quest in despair, he learned that the Rev. John Disney (1746-1816) of Lincolnshire, who was husband of Mrs. Lindsey's half-sister, and was also his own intimate friend, was resigning his livings and would be glad to be his colleague. The offer was gladly accepted, and Dr. Disney entered upon his new service at the beginning of 1783.⁴⁵

Thus after bearing his heavy burden alone for nearly ten years, Lindsey was now enabled to put his hand to tasks in a somewhat wider sphere. From this time on his voyage was in calm waters and with fair winds. His health was good, his circumstances were comfortable, his valued friends were many, and his large congregation was devoted to him. In politics he was a zealous Whig, though he took no public part in political meetings; but the war with the American Colonies was at its height, and his sympathies lay strongly with the colonists, as did those of Priestley, Price, Jebb, and indeed most of the

versity he was conspicuous for his efforts favoring reform in the system of discipline and especially in instituting annual public examinations. On this account, as well as for the freedom he showed in his lectures, and his support of the movement against subscription, he was systematically opposed by influential circles, and was thus moved to resign his preferments in 1775. Then already in middle life he took his degree in medicine, and began practice in London; but implacable hostility still pursued him here, though it could not prevent him from winning a high professional reputation, nor keep him from taking an active part in movements for political and social reform. His health early became undermined, and he died in 1786 at the early age of fifty. Cf. *Memoirs of his life by Dr. John Disney*, in Jebb's *Works* (London, 1787); Turner, *Eminent Unitarians*, ii, 82-117; Jebb, *Reasons for a late Resignation*, in his *Works*, ii, 203-224.

⁴⁴ Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 168-175.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xii (1817), 55 f; Turner, *Eminent Unitarians*, ii, 178-213; Disney, *Reasons for Resigning the Rectory of Panton, etc., and Quitting the Church of England* (London, 1783). After graduating at Cambridge Disney at once entered the ministry. He was troubled by the question of subscription, and never read the Athanasian Creed in church, and later made yet other omissions. He took part in the Feathers Tavern Association, and finally resigned his preferments. He was honored with the doctorate from Edinburgh in 1777, and published several valuable works. Upon Lindsey's retirement in 1793 Dr. Disney succeeded him, and served until 1805, when he too retired. In 1802 he substituted a new Prayer Book of his own composition for that which Lindsey had used; but on his retirement three years later the older book was restored to use.

liberal Dissenters of the period. It therefore gave Lindsey great satisfaction to learn in 1786 that King's Chapel, the first Episcopal Church in Boston, had revised its Liturgy,⁴⁶ adopting essentially the changes proposed by Dr. Clarke, which had also been the basis of Lindsey's revision. Having more time at disposal Lindsey now became the more busy with his pen. In 1783 he published *An Historical View . . . of the Unitarian Doctrine and Worship from the Reformation to our own Times*, the first attempt in English to trace the progress of Unitarianism as essentially one movement in Poland, Transylvania and England, thus giving his own recent movement a setting as part of a much older and larger one scarcely younger than Protestantism itself. Two years later Lindsey was reluctantly drawn into a doctrinal controversy in print. The Rev. Robert Robinson, popular minister of a Baptist congregation at Cambridge, had published *A Plea for the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (Cambridge, 1776). It was a superficial work, resting its argument on a collection of proof-texts uncritically treated, but it was attractively written in a popular style, and with such assurance that it was widely accepted by both churchmen and Dissenters, even by Blackburne, as virtually unanswerable. Unitarians had for some years deemed it too weak a work to deserve a serious reply, but when the case therefore threatened to go by default, Lindsey, whose writings had been chiefly attacked by Robinson, entered the lists with an anonymous *Examination of Mr. Robinson of Cambridge's Plea for the Divinity of Christ*, which placed his arguments under scholarly scrutiny, and so unsparingly shattered them that Robinson never attempted an answer, and a few years later even came over to the Unitarian position himself.⁴⁷

Passing over several minor works, mention has to be made of one more. Dr. Priestley, having addressed a series of letters to students at the two Universities, was anonymously answered by the President of Magdalen College, Oxford, who instead of refuting Priestley's argu-

⁴⁶ Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, p. 238 ff; F. W. P. Greenwood, *History of King's Chapel* (Boston, 1833), pp. 137-140.

⁴⁷ Cf. Belsham's *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 179-194. It is interesting to note that a few years later Robinson wrote a large volume of *Ecclesiastical Researches* — his last work, not published until after his death — (Cambridge, 1792), which includes, among other things, a digest of what continental writers had written on the history of Socinianism in Poland and of Unitarianism in Transylvania, thus for the first time introducing them in detail to English readers. See the extensive review by his biographer in George Dyer, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Robert Robinson* (London, 1796), pp. 353-395.

ment proceeded in *ex cathedra* style to discredit him as unqualified to write of religion, and to speak contemptuously of his writings. Upon this Lindsey came forward as champion of his friend in a work entitled *Vindiciae Priestleianae: an Address to the Students of Oxford and Cambridge* (London, 1788). In this work Lindsey ably vindicated Priestley's competence both as scientist ('philosopher') and as theologian, defended him against his critic, and justified his views as to the inspiration of the Scriptures and the nature and work of Christ; while in *A Second Address*, etc. (London, 1790) he devoted himself to the person and character of Christ.⁴⁸ By this time his own views as to Christ had undergone a change, from the time when he had cautiously accepted the supernatural factors in the gospel history and had been alarmed at Priestley's boldness in adopting more radical views until now, persuaded by his friend's writings, he at length became convinced that Christ was in all respects a fully human being, that the stories of his birth were not historically true, that the miracle stories were more or less legendary, and that in his nature and teachings he was not exempt from the frailties and errors of other men.⁴⁹ It was partly in consequence of these changes in his thought that Lindsey in 1793 revised and published a fourth edition of his liturgy, marked by the omission of the Apostles' Creed and of several invocations in the Litany. Shortly after this, having reached the age of seventy years, he resigned his office, and never would enter the pulpit again.

The remaining fifteen years of his life Lindsey spent in a serene and happy old age. He was blessed in the intimate companionship of valued friends, among whom was Dr. Priestley who, after being driven from Birmingham by the mob in 1791, became minister of Dr. Price's old congregation at Hackney, as well as lecturer in the New College founded there in 1786. He felt it an irreparable loss when Priestley removed to America in 1794, but they kept up an intimate correspondence as long as Priestley lived. He had a lively interest in the College at Hackney, and was active in promoting in 1791 the first Unitarian organization for propaganda, The Unitarian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and its important project, *An Improved Version of the New Testament* (London, 1808). He was able to finish his last significant work just as his health began to give way —

⁴⁸ Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 196-319.

⁴⁹ Cf. Belsham, *op. cit.*, pp. 220-235.

Conversations on the Divine Government, showing that everything is from God and for Good to all (London, 1802), a work of exuberant optimism, based upon the experiences of his long life.⁵⁰ In 1805 Dr Disney was forced by ill health to resign, but no further attempt was made to secure a successor from among the dissatisfied clergy in the Church. Choice was therefore made of a Dissenter, the Rev Thomas Belsham of the New College at Hackney, who had lately come over from the Independents. With this, Lindsey's dream of initiating a Unitarian secession from the Anglican Church was shattered, and in spite of his hopes he found himself and his congregation in the ranks of the Dissenters. Under his auspices chapels had indeed been opened at Highbury and Plymouth Dock (Devonport, 1790), but they were manned by Dissenters and soon faded away. Lindsey's Prayer Book also was for a time used in the chapel of the English merchants at Dunkirk after 1791, and various other experiments were made; but in only one instance, at Manchester, was the use long continued in the nineteenth century.⁵¹

Nor was his fancy realized, that after the failure of the Feathers Tavern petition numbers of the Anglican clergy would perhaps follow him and resign their preferments, for of the 200 or more petitioners hardly half a score left the service of the Church, and of these only four (Disney, Palmer, Evanson, and Theophilus Brown) undertook ministry among the Unitarians.⁵² Indeed, to this day, though not a few

⁵⁰ For an abstract of the work, cf Belsham, *op cit*, pp 402-431.

⁵¹ Cf Gordon, *Heads*, p 43, *id*, *Addresses*, p 279.

⁵² Deserving of mention in the record, besides Jebb and Disney above named are Edward Evanson (1731-1805), sometime vicar of Tewkesbury who resigned his preferment (*v Monthly Repository*, 1 (1806), 57), Robert Tyrwhitt (1735-1817), intimate friend of Jebb who resigned his fellowship at Cambridge (*v Monthly Repository*, xii (1817), 316, Paul Henry Maty (1745-87), who withdrew from the ministry (*v Gentleman's Magazine* lvi (1787), 92), Thomas Fyshe Palmer (1747-1802), who resigned his fellowship at Cambridge and withdrew from the Church, but preached to early Unitarian congregations at Dundee and elsewhere in Scotland for eight years, until in the general excitement caused by the French Revolution he as a liberal, was accused by alarmists of exciting sedition was judged guilty and sentenced to be transported to Botany Bay for seven years, and was overtaken by death while returning home (cf Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp 351-358), Gilbert Wakefield (1756-81), who resigned after a short ministry and became a teacher and famous biblical and classical scholar (cf his *Memoirs*, London, 1792), and William Frend (1757-1841), who was removed from his fellowship at Cambridge and banished from the University and spent the rest of his long life in literary pursuits (cf *Gentleman's Magazine*, lxxviii (1841), 541. For further details of all these, cf Lindsey, *Historical View of the State of the Unitarian Doctrine*, etc, pp 477-551; Turner, *Eminent Unitarians*, II, 82-312, Hunt, *Religious Tracts*, III, 265-269.

ministers from other denominations have sought Unitarian fellowship, the number of recruits from the Anglican Church has been comparatively few.

After his retirement Lindsey continued to take an active interest in the work of Essex Street Chapel, and in publication of the *Improved Version of the New Testament*; but early in 1808 his health, which had for several years been showing the infirmities of age, began to be seriously impaired, and on November 3, 1808, he passed to his rest.⁵⁸

While Lindsey fell far short of influencing the established Church as he had hoped, his influence upon liberal Dissent was effective and helped to give a group of incoherent churches, with no bond of union stronger than a sense of freedom from old bonds, a sense of positive conviction and of a common mission for both defence and aggressive action, and a willingness not to shun but boldly to avow and defend a distinctive position. Thus the first step was taken toward the formation of a new denomination. Beginnings were slow; but stimulated by the courageous example of Lindsey, and the fearless, unequivocal preaching and writing of Priestley, their followers ceased to play the rôle of a submerged tenth, and boldly used freedom of speech in asserting their rights, so that whereas, midway of Lindsey's ministry in London, but two congregations in England avowed the Unitarian name, in 1810 there were 20, and growth thenceforth was rapid. The cautious older leaders died off, and younger men came forward with fresh spirit, controversy kept disputed points in view, free spirits came from the Dissenting colleges to the ministry of the churches, and in 1813 the passage of the Trinity Act freed Unitarians from the penalties of a long dormant law.

In all this gradual transformation Lindsey's influence, though quiet, was strong and persuasive. He was not a great or original thinker, and for his authority he seldom dared to go beyond the plain word of Scripture; but his writings were marked by the sincerity and earnestness of an open mind, which left its own impression. His purpose was rather to promote Christian life and character than to propagate sectarian doctrine, and his opposition to the traditional dogmas as to God and Christ arose not more from the fact that they were foreign to Scripture, than that they were a serious hindrance to sincere religious worship. Worship of Christ in any sense he did not hesitate

⁵⁸ His tomb is in Bunhill Fields, as is that of Mrs. Lindsey, who survived him a little

to denounce as sheer idolatry; while to the term Unitarianism, which had hitherto been applied to cover all varieties of unorthodox views of God—Sabellianism, Socinianism, Arianism—he now gave a new and restricted meaning relating only to worship. ‘The Unitarian doctrine,’ he declared, ‘is this: that religious worship is to be addressed only to the One True God, the Father.’ From this point on, the other terms steadily passed out of use. It remained for other leaders to make this movement more wide-reaching and effective by extending the reformation of religious thought to a broader range in the doctrinal field, and by organizing its forces for vigorous action as a firmly coherent and well integrated religious body. These two contributions were chiefly embodied in the work of two other men to whom we have next to turn, namely, Joseph Priestley and Thomas Belsham: the former in stimulating the religious thought of the new denomination, the latter in organizing its forces for constructive action.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LIBERAL DISSENTERS FOLLOW THE LEADERSHIP OF JOSEPH PRIESTLEY

IT HAS BEEN NOTED in an earlier chapter that after the Assembly at Salters' Hall there seemed to be a marked decline in vigor among the Dissenting Churches. Indeed, for nearly a full century after the passage of the Toleration Act, there was grave concern over the marked let-down in religion, morals and manners, both among the Dissenters and in the Church, though we shall here be concerned chiefly with the situation in the non-subscribing congregations inheriting the Presbyterian tradition. For this general lukewarmness in religion many and various reasons were alleged,¹ some superficial and others fundamental; but in the main they amounted to this: that the Dissenters, being now relieved from galling oppression, were no longer spurred on as before to devotion to their cause, and finding themselves 'at ease in Zion,' for the time lost their sense of the deep importance of their mission, as one demanding loyal, active allegiance. Hence among Non-conformists of every order religion seemed to have lost its inspiring power.² Presbyterianism in especial had become a coldly intellectual religion, whose preachers discoursed mainly on abstract themes, with little appeal to the feelings or the will, and their movement seemed no longer to have any convincing reason for continuing to exist. In short, if their whole cause was not within another generation or two to disintegrate and die out, a sense must be aroused of its vital importance, and its distinguishing principles and views must be emphasized afresh both for defence and for aggressive effort. This new impulse was to be given largely through the influence of a leader that

¹ Cf. on the one hand, Philip Doddridge, *Free Thoughts on the most probable means of reviving the Dissenting Interest* (London, 1720); Isaac Watts, *An Humble Attempt toward the Revival of Practical Religion among Christians, and particularly the Protestant Dissenters* (London, 1731); and on the other, articles in the *Monthly Repository*, vols. iv, v (1809-'10), *passim*.

² Cf. Harry W. Clark, *History of English Non-conformity* (London, 1913), pp. 198, 200.

now arose in the person of Joseph Priestley, in whom the development of our movement in its next stage may be said to have been largely embodied.

Joseph Priestley,³ who was beyond doubt the most influential figure in the earlier history of the Unitarian movement in England, and has also been judged one of the most remarkable men of the eighteenth century,⁴ was born in 1733 in the little hamlet of Fieldhead some six miles southwest of Leeds. He was the eldest child of a domestic cloth maker in narrow circumstances, and his mother died when he was but six years old. Both before and after this he was brought up by his grandmother and by an aunt, a strict Calvinist, who gave him devoted care until he went away to school. His early teachers were Dissenting ministers in the neighborhood. He was a precocious youth, showed an eager and inquisitive mind, was deeply interested in religious matters, was an omnivorous reader, and looking toward the ministry became well grounded in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Before leaving home for his studies at the Academy he wished to become a member of the Independent Church in which he had been brought up; but from visiting ministers he had learned to dissent from Calvin on some points, and when the Elders discovered that he did not feel a proper repentance for Adam's sin, they judged him not quite orthodox and refused to admit him. He was in fact already verging toward Arminianism.

His aunt would normally have sent him to a Calvinistic Academy in London; but when he learned that a student there must subscribe ten Articles of Calvinistic faith, and repeat the act every six months, he was unwilling to comply. It was therefore decided that he should go to Dr. Doddridge's well known Academy at Northampton, but before he could do so Doddridge died, and his Academy was removed to Daventry, where Priestley was the first student enrolled. His three years here were stimulating, for of his two tutors one was an orthodox Calvinist, while the other was inclined toward heresy, and the stu-

³ For his life, cf. his personal *Memoirs* continued by his son (London, 1806), reprinted in a centennial edition (London, 1904). The same, incorporating also his voluminous correspondence, and edited with notes by John Towill Rutt in vol. 1 (two parts) of Rutt's edition of Priestley's *Theological and Miscellaneous Works* in 26 volumes (London, 1831-'32). For briefer treatment see John Corry, *Life of Joseph Priestley* (Birmingham, 1804), T. E. Thorpe, *Joseph Priestley* (London, 1906), Anne Holt, *Life of Joseph Priestley* (London, 1921), Alexander Gordon, 'Priestley as a Pioneer in Theological Science,' in *Heads*, pp. 102-134.

⁴ Cf. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

dents were about equally divided. Entire freedom of inquiry was encouraged, and students were encouraged to study the arguments on both sides of disputed questions and to discuss them freely; wherein Priestley found himself in nearly every case taking the heretical side; so that whereas he had entered the Academy a moderate Calvinist and a believer in freedom of the will, he left it a determinist and an Arian.

His prospects in the ministry can not have been too flattering, for he had inherited a tendency to stammer in public speaking; hence he cheerfully accepted the first modest opening that offered, as assistant to a superannuated minister at Needham Market in Suffolk, where the stipend from his small congregation was never more than £30 a year, so that but for gifts from outside friends he would have suffered serious want. Yet he took up his work vigorously, preaching practical, helpful sermons, catechizing the young and lecturing to adults. As he continued his serious studies of Scripture he found his convictions sensibly changing, and ere long he abandoned belief in the atonement and in the supernatural inspiration of the Bible. Though he was careful not to give offence by bringing heresies into the pulpit, it was presently discovered from his conversation that he was an Arian; hence his congregation fell off, and he found himself in serious straits. But at just this juncture he was invited to be minister of a small but friendly congregation at Nantwich in Cheshire, and removed thither in 1758, there to spend three happy years. As the demands made upon him were light he supplemented his salary (as many Dissenting ministers of the time were accustomed to do) by opening a school, teaching thirty boys and a few girls from seven to four each day, and private pupils after this until seven in the evening. Laborious as this daily round was he greatly enjoyed it, and won a high reputation as a teacher.

Meantime a very promising Academy on liberal principles had been established in 1757 at Warrington some twenty miles away, and Priestley was called thither to be tutor in the languages and belles-lettres. His fellow tutors were able scholars and progressive in spirit; and all were Arians in doctrine and determinists in morals. Only the Rev. John Seddon of Manchester was as yet a Socinian, whereat, Priestley observed, 'we all wondered at him.'⁵ The social and intellectual atmosphere was delightful, and Priestley was happy in his work, and stimu-

⁵ Cf. *Works*, I, i, 59.

lating in his teaching. He was, however, not long satisfied to be teaching only languages and belles-lettres; hence he broadened his field to include not only English grammar and rhetoric, composition, oratory and logic, but English history, the English constitution and law, the principles of government, colonial administration, and economics, so as to provide the young men with at least the rudiments of knowledge in fields in which as citizens they might take an intelligent part. The result of these studies upon him was that he thus matured himself for the influential part he was destined through his writings to play in the discussion of public affairs relating to the war with the American Colonies, the French Revolution, and the agitation for justice to the Dissenters.

While at Warrington Priestley used to spend a month each year in London, gaining stimulus from the eminent men whom he there met in liberal circles both religious and political. It was thus that he came to form an intimate friendship for life with Dr. Richard Price,⁶ and with Dr. Benjamin Franklin, then in London in the interest of the American Colonies, Priestley was entirely happy in his situation and work at Warrington, but he had now married, and he found his meager salary insufficient for the needs of his growing family, with his wife in uncertain health; so that when in 1767 he was invited to become minister of the influential Mill Hill congregation at Leeds near his early home, he gladly returned to his chosen calling; for he

⁶ Dr. Richard Price (1723-91), son of a Congregational minister, educated at a Dissenting Academy in London, after twelve years of reading and study while acting as domestic chaplain, became minister (now an acknowledged Arian) of a suburban congregation at Stoke Newington (1758), and from 1770 on at the Gravel Pit meeting at Hackney. Besides being a diligent pastor, he wrote *A Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals* (1758), which attracted wide attention; *Observations on Reversionary Payments* (1771), which first placed life insurance on a sound scientific basis, and led to his being considered the father of life insurance and old age pensions. He became an intimate and life-long friend of Priestley, Lindsey, Franklin and Lord Shelburne. As an outspoken friend of the American Colonies and correspondent with several prominent Americans he published (1776) *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Civil Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America*, of which over 60,000 copies were sold, with profound influence on both countries. He became the most famous preacher in London. Squarely disagreeing with Priestley in doctrinal and philosophical views, he was joint-author with him of *A Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity* (1778), in which with perfect good temper and unbroken friendship he maintained the spiritual nature and freedom of man. Aberdeen made him a D.D. in 1767, and Yale an LL.D. in 1787 on the same day with George Washington. Cf. Roland Thomas, *Richard Price, Philosopher and Apostle of Liberty* (London, 1924).

declared that he 'could truly say that he always considered the office of a Christian minister the most honorable of any upon earth'⁷

At Leeds Priestley enjoyed six exceedingly happy and harmonious years. He renewed his attention to theological subjects, which he had at Warrington been obliged to neglect, and now, having carefully re-read Lardner's *Letter on the Logos*, after the author's death, he 'became what is called a Socinian,' thus leaving his Arianism behind. He at once attacked his new duties with energy. He had now for some time felt that the Dissenting interest was losing ground, and was much concerned over the Dissenters' apparent indifference to their cause, and the lukewarmness and lack of zeal prevailing especially among those whom he chose to call Rational Dissenters. Hence he published for the use of his congregation a series of tracts seriously commending a general practice of daily family worship, the catechizing of children, and the maintenance of church discipline among adult members. In order to revive the attention of Dissenters at large to their true principles, which they seemed little to understand or value, he also published *A Free Address to Protestant Dissenters as such*,⁸ a straightforward and serious call to Dissenters to remember their high calling and the cause for which their fathers had greatly suffered, to hold fast its teaching without wavering, and to honor it by their daily lives. This address was widely approved and did much to restore the tone of those to whom it was directed, and it was followed the next year by *An Appeal to the Serious and Candid Professors of Christianity*, in six doctrinal tracts, designed to confirm in the principles of liberal religion any members of his own congregation that were tempted to be either drawn away by the emotional appeal of the Methodists, then very numerous at Leeds, or on the other hand were inclined to slip into Deism. These had great influence, and eventually reached a circulation of 60,000 copies.⁹ From this date as a turning point one can

⁷ Cf. his *Works* I i 68.

⁸ Cf. *Works*, xxi, 449-467, 474-46, xxii 247-301.

⁹ The writings mentioned above though addressed to Dissenters, were virulently attacked by churchmen into whose hands they fell, and drew Priestley in his reply into his first important controversy, especially with Judge Blackstone, who in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* had insinuated that the spirit, doctrine and practices of Dissenters as such were not calculated to make men good subjects. Cf. Priestley, *Works*, xxii, 362-379. He ere long became an accomplished pamphleteer, who seldom let pass an opportunity to reply to an attack or to correct a misunderstanding. As such he came to be regarded as the outstanding spokesman not only for the Unitarian interest, but for civil and religious liberty in general.

trace a revival of devotion and active zeal for their cause among the rational Dissenters.

Priestley took particular interest in the systematic religious instruction of his young people; forming them into classes to be taught as in an Academy, and the children into classes to be instructed in a scripture catechism. For the older classes he completed a work long in hand, and now published as *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion* (1772-73), which set forth the main principles and doctrines of Dissent, with the grounds of them. This may be noted as the first attempt since Biddle's *Two-fold Catechism* in 1654 to set forth the essential faith of liberal Dissenters (hardly named Unitarians as yet) as a fully rounded system. It was not controversial in tone, though many articles in the orthodox system were passed by without mention; and it long remained the text to which Unitarians could refer as an accepted witness to their teachings.

His deepened interest now made him feel the need of a medium through which contributors might freely express their ideas and discuss topics of interest. He therefore launched the *Theological Repository*¹⁰ as an occasional publication in which writers of all shades of thought might bring their views to public notice. Through this many fresh points were brought forward, and free inquiry in religion was much increased; though as sufficient support was wanting, publication was suspended after three volumes (1769-71), and was not resumed until more than a dozen years later. It was in this period that Priestley first made the acquaintance of Lindsey, who had not yet withdrawn from the established Church,¹¹ and began an intimacy with him that was unbroken so long as he lived, and as he later wrote was 'the source of more real satisfaction to him than any other circumstance in his whole life.' From Lindsey he imbibed greater zeal for the doctrine of the Divine Unity, and he soon came to submit to his judgment anything that he wrote on theology before publishing it.¹² In the Feathers Tavern petition that presently followed, Priestley as a Dissenter could take no part, and he had no expectation of its success, but he followed developments with lively interest;¹³ and when Lindsey opened his

¹⁰ Cf. McLachlan, 'The Earliest Unitarian Periodical,' in his *Nonconformist Library*, pp. 88-104.

¹¹ v. *supra*, Ms p. 553.

¹² Cf. *Works*, I, i, 81-86.

¹³ *Op. cit.*, I, i, 144 f, 159-161.

chapel in London Priestley, now no longer at Leeds, was able to give it his hearty support.

In every duty relating to his office Priestley was assiduous and gave it precedence over every other interest. But it was not in his nature to be idle, nor to waste his labor in vain occupations. Hence when not occupied with professional duties he would seek relaxation in other fields of study. Thus he began to make those excursions in chemistry which were to win him his greatest renown. He had at the outset very little knowledge of the subject, and was forced to contrive his own apparatus and invent his own processes; and at first he made random experiments out of mere curiosity as to what would happen, and so was led from one thing to another. Thus having by accident begun by experimenting on air he presently came unexpectedly to results which led the Royal Society to confer upon him its highest honor, the Copley medal. A year or two later he made his crowning discovery of oxygen (1774), and altogether discovered more new gases than all his predecessors together had done,¹⁴ thus winning the reputation of being one of the founders of modern chemistry. It is not to the purpose here to follow his work in this field. He himself professed little more than a casual interest in it, as being for him hardly more than a theologian's pastime. In his personal *Memoirs* he passes over these achievements in the space of barely more than a page; and twenty years later he wrote, 'though I have made discoveries in some branches of chemistry, I never gave much attention to the common routine of it, and know but little of the common processes.'¹⁵ He was, however, while at Leeds tempted for a passing moment to follow the paths of science. It was proposed to him in 1770 to accompany Captain Cook on his second voyage to the South Seas as astronomer, on very advantageous terms, to which he was ready to agree, and his congregation had already arranged to grant him leave of absence. But before the appointment could be made, some clergymen on the appointing board objected to him on account of his religious principles, and another was chosen.¹⁶

In 1773, however, after six happy years at Leeds, came a temptation that it was hard to resist. Though his salary was larger than that of

¹⁴ Cf. Huxley's address in *The Priestley Memorial at Birmingham* (London, 1875), p. 12.

¹⁵ Cf. *Works*, I, ii, 306.

¹⁶ Cf. *Works*, I, i, 157, 79 f.

most Dissenting ministers, yet it did not meet the needs of his growing family; and when the Earl of Shelburne,¹⁷ to whom he had been recommended by his warm friend Dr Price, offered him an appointment with a generous salary and a life annuity, with much freedom of action, he yielded after long hesitation to the Earl's importunity and was in his service for seven years. Nominally his position as his patron's librarian and literary companion gave him ample leisure for scientific experiments and writing. Summers he spent at the Earl's country estate at Calne, and winters he was with him in London. Thus he had the opportunity of meeting most of the distinguished men of the day, and he also accompanied his patron on an interesting journey of several weeks through the Low Countries, up the Rhine, and finally to Paris. Here he spent a month, meeting many men of science to whom his name was now well known; and discussing religion with them he found nearly all of them to be professed infidels, while they told him that he was the only person they had ever met with of whose understanding they had any opinion, who professed to believe Christianity.¹⁸ It was in order to justify himself and confute them that he afterwards wrote the first part of his *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever*.¹⁹ Returning to England he continued his scientific work and developed and published the philosophical works he had derived from Hartley.²⁰

Doubtless Priestley's happiest experiences during these years were in the winter months, which he spent with his patron in London. Here he could meet the leading Dissenters, and consult about their common interests, and have intimate conversations with Lindsey and Price. Sundays were sure to find him worshipping in the Essex Street chapel, at whose opening in 1774 he was present, and in whose pulpit he some times preached. After the service he would spend the rest of the day at the fireside of the Lindseys. At the Royal Society he had contact with the learned men of the country's intellectual centre, and through the

¹⁷ A prominent liberal statesman of the period. A friend of the Dissenters and of civil and religious liberty, he advocated a conciliatory policy toward the American Colonies, became premier, and negotiated the treaty of peace with America 1783. was created Marquis of Landsdowne 1784, and died 1785.

¹⁸ Cf. *Works*, I, 1, 199-255.

¹⁹ Cf. *Works*, IV, 317, also later, XXI, 87-169.

²⁰ Cf. Priestley, *Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit* and *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity Illustrated* (1777), and the *Free Discussion* with Price, previously noted.

whole of the period when England was stirred up over the war with the American Colonies, he was often one of a group of liberals (the so called 'Whig Club') meeting at the London Coffee house to discuss national affairs. One of this group was likely to be Dr Franklin, who had become his very intimate friend, whom he met nearly every day, and in whose company he spent all of Franklin's last day in England. Yet Priestley was on the whole not too well contented with the sort of life he was bound to lead, and with the society with which he often had to mingle, and when he discovered that in his position he was in some ways embarrassing to his patron, the connection between them was amicably terminated in 1780. He had no immediate plans for the future, but wealthy friends, who were reluctant to see his scientific investigations fall to the ground, contributed a sufficient fund for him and persuaded him to remove to Birmingham. His settlement here, though it was after eleven years to end in crushing tragedy, he considered the happiest period of his life. For Birmingham had not only grown to be a great manufacturing centre, enjoying high prosperity, but it was at the same time one of the centres of intellectual culture in England.

Soon after his removal to Birmingham, Priestley was invited to succeed the Rev Micaiah Towgood at George's Meeting in Exeter, but he preferred to stay where he was, and within a few months after his arrival the pulpit of the New Meeting fell vacant, and Priestley was at once unanimously chosen to fill the position. It was the most liberal pulpit in England, and the neighboring Midland counties had already been leavened with Socinian beliefs some years before by the Rev Paul Cardale of Evesham.²¹ A more congenial environment for Priestley's ministry could therefore not have been found, and he at once accepted the call. Proud to have as their minister the famous scientist, his people willingly made it easy for him to continue his researches. It was arranged that his colleague should have charge of the sundry pastoral duties and visit the members four times a year, while he himself should devote to church work only his Sundays, preaching to the congregation, giving religious instruction to the young people, and catechizing the children. Week days he reserved for work in his laboratory, and for the writing that he wished to do.

²¹ Cf. his *True Doctrine of the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ*, ed. 2 (London, 1771).

Priestley took up the duties of his office with energy. In the pulpit while not an orator he was a calm, reasonable and persuasive preacher. In the religious education of the young he was singularly successful, winning both their interest and affection, and their parents' gratitude for his ministry to them.²² Improving on the plan he had introduced at Leeds, he used to instruct three successive classes of different ages before or after the morning service, having in all 150 catechumens. As contributory to this work he now revived the *Theological Repository* which had been suspended for a dozen years, and which he evidently wished to make the vehicle of some new views at which he had arrived. Thus in one of his articles in this publication he took a longer and bolder step than Dissent had yet ventured, arguing that as Jesus was in all things made like unto his brethren, then he must have had all the frailties of a human being, moral as well as physical;²³ and in another article, on the Miraculous Conception,²⁴ he expressed unequivocally and openly the view that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary. These judgments, which others may have held privately, but no one had as yet openly avowed, at first created great alarm, especially in the mind of Lindsey, though ere long he too had quietly accepted them.²⁵

Of all his writings in his Birmingham period the most important and influential was Priestley's work on the *Corruptions of Christianity*,²⁶ and its sequel, in preparation for which he had read widely from Continental scholars. It had hitherto been maintained by orthodox theologians that their doctrine was the doctrine of the primitive Church; though Liberal Dissenters had of late contended that primitive Christianity was Arian. The thesis of Priestley's work, on the contrary, was that the belief of primitive Christianity was Unitarian, and that all departures from that faith must be regarded as later 'corruptions.' This thesis he sought to sustain by appealing to the works of early Christian literature, and he applied it not only to the doctrine

²² Cf. *Works*, xv, 45-69, especially 56 f.

²³ Cf. *Theological Repository*, iv, 433-461.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, v, 91-108.

²⁵ Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 231-237.

²⁶ *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* (Birmingham, 1782); Dutch trans., *Historie der Verbasteringen van het Christendom* (Dordrecht, 1784-87); German trans., *Geschichte der Verfälschungen des Christenthums* (Hamburg, 1785). A summary of this work and of the ensuing controversies is given in the 'Observations on Priestley's Writings,' by Thomas Cooper, appended to *Memoirs of Joseph Priestley* (London, 1806), pp. 617-708.

of Christ and the Trinity, but also to various other orthodox doctrines and usages. It was mainly the part of this work relating to Christ that became the subject of the controversies that followed. The work, written in clear and readable style, proceeds historically to trace the steps through which, through the infiltration of late Greek philosophy, the original Unitarian beliefs were gradually transformed into the dogmas of orthodoxy. Among the leaders of the Church this book at once created alarm, lest a new crowd of converts to Unitarianism might now follow those that had withdrawn ten years earlier with Lindsey. Through translations its influence spread on the Continent, where it was attacked in Germany by the Lutherans, while in Holland Calvinists had it burned by the common hangman at Dordrecht in 1785.²⁷ But the most important controversy was that which now ensued in England between Priestley and Horsley, and lasted for some eight years, to be again revived by Horsley's son thirty years later.

Samuel Horsley,²⁸ born in the same year as Priestley, and like him a fellow of the Royal Society, had received various preferments in the Church, and had become Archdeacon of St Albans in 1781, where he was esteemed an able preacher and a vigorous administrator. He at once realized the importance of counteracting a teaching that struck at the very root of the orthodox theology, and the next spring he made this the burden of a charge to his clergy, which was at once accepted by the orthodox as a crushing triumph for their view, though it proved to be only the opening action in a spirited controversy between the two champions.²⁹ The battle was in fact preceded by a spiteful attack (under the guise of a review), in the *Monthly Review*, by an anony-

²⁷ The Hague Society for the Defence of the Christian Religion offered prizes for essays refuting Priestley's work, of which three were published (s Gravenhage, 1787), by Abdias Velengius, Carolus Segaar, and Cornelis Gavel.

²⁸ Cf. Heneage Horsley Jebb *A Great Bishop of One Hundred Years ago* (London, 1909).

²⁹ Priestley's part of the controversy is found in his *Works* vols xviii, xix, but the items on both sides may be most conveniently consulted in the two opposed collections by Priestley, *Letters to Dr Horsley*, etc., in three parts (Birmingham, 1783-86, by Horsley, *Tracts in Controversy with Dr Priestley* (Gloucester, 1789). A partisan abstract of the controversy is given in an Appendix to Thomas Belsham, *Calm Inquiry into the Scripture Doctrine concerning the Person of Christ* (London, 1811), pp 422-446. Cf. also Belsham, *Claims of Dr Priestley in the Controversy* etc (London, 1814), reprinted from *Monthly Repository*, viii, ix (1813-14), *passim*, (Andrews Norton), 'An Account of the Controversy between Dr Priestley and Dr Horsley,' etc., *General Repository* (Boston), i, 26-58, 229-237, ii, 7-38, 257-288, iii, 13-124, 250-299 (1812-13).

mous writer.³⁰ Horsley in his charge to his clergy, addressing himself to the subject of Priestley's work, adopted a skilful tactical method. He declined to go into the doctrine of the Trinity at all, though it was Priestley's main concern; and deeming that all that could be said on that subject had already been said long since, he judged that the most effective attack would be made by destroying Priestley's credit, through proving him incompetent in questions of theology. To this end he picked out a number of points in which Priestley had left himself most vulnerable, and made these the object of his attack. Priestley, writing too hastily, had in fact fallen into some minor inaccuracies, though they were not important enough to invalidate his main argument; but Horsley exaggerated and emphasized them as capital, and there rested his case.

Priestley was not so easily silenced. Owning that he did not dislike controversy, which he esteemed the best method of settling matters in debate, he replied to Horsley's 'Animadversions' in a series of nine printed letters in which, while admitting some defects of haste, he defended at length the main positions he had taken. Horsley rejoined the next year in seventeen long letters, repeating the charge that Priestley was incompetent to discuss the subject. Priestley replied in nineteen letters more, pointing out serious lapses in his opponent's positions, and accused him of being a falsifier of history. Three letters more passed, and then the controversy ceased.

It would be an idle task to summarize the course of this eight years' debate, whose subject matter has long since ceased to be of interest to more than a few. Priestley began as one gentleman calmly discussing a serious question with another, but being entirely convinced that his own view was correct he hastily fell into inaccuracies and errors that his acute antagonist was quick to discover and unduly to magnify. While admitting certain minor incidental errors, which did not in validate his main argument, he retorted by charging Horsley with being misinformed and hence using misrepresentation. In pressing a point he was relentless, and in the tone of controversy he could be

³⁰ Presently identified as the Rev. Samuel Badcock. He had hitherto been a Dissenting minister, and a fervent admirer and friend of Priestley, but having lost standing in the Dissenting ministry he conformed, became Priestley's bitter opponent, and took orders in the Church. He died soon after. Cf. Priestley, *Works*, xix, 533-538. Cf. *Monthly Review* (London), lxxviii-lxxxi (1783-84), *passim*.

exasperating Horsley on the other hand, speaking from the level of a high ecclesiastic to a mere layman and hence an inferior, was often arrogant, overbearing and even contemptuous in manner, indulged in biting sarcasm, and employed what Priestley regarded as grossly insulting language. While making an impressive display of theological scholarship, he proved to be but repeating the statements of earlier writers, who were shown to have fallen into serious errors themselves, nevertheless he confidently claimed to have won the victory, and declined to continue the controversy. His clergy naturally accepted the claim of their champion, and when it was officially endorsed by his elevation to the see of St David's in 1788,⁸¹ he was placed beyond the reach of further debate. But Priestley too claimed to have won the victory, since his antagonist had withdrawn from the field, and after waiting nearly three years for a reply to his third series he finally addressed to him a fourth series of ten letters, now to his Lordship the Bishop of St David's, in 1790.⁸² In the meantime his *History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ* (1786) in four volumes had appeared, a work of massive scholarship, resting its contentions on 1,500 references to ancient authorities, with a thousand passages translated for all to read and judge for themselves. This work Horsley with haughty scorn excused himself from reading. The result of all was that churchmen as a matter of course accepted the judgment of a Bishop as definitive, and few if any withdrew from the Church; while the liberal Dissenters on the other hand, heartened by their champion, who had boldly faced a proud antagonist and forced him to withdraw from the field, silenced if not confessedly defeated, were more than ever convinced of their cause, and more drawn together in support of it under such a competent leader, and the number of congregations openly adhering to them steadily increased from now on.

It will be recalled that after the failure of the Feathers Tavern petition in 1772 and the relief from subscription granted Dissenters in 1779, these grew increasingly restive under their civil disabilities; and in 1787 their Committee of Deputies thought the time ripe for appealing to Parliament for repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, which they felt placed them in a humiliating position, and deprived them of

⁸¹ He was later translated to be Bishop of Rochester, 1793, and of St Asaph's, 1802, and died 1806.

⁸² Cf. Priestley, *Works* xix, 1-52, 509-523, xxv, 188-195.

the just rights of free citizens⁸³ Fear was professed that this was but an opening wedge for further changes calculated to uproot the established Church, and endangering the State; and the motion was lost by a majority of 78.⁸⁴ Two years later the attempt was renewed and the adverse majority was reduced to 20. The Acts were much agitated by both Dissenters and churchmen in public meetings throughout the country, while both parties sought to rally their utmost forces, but certain victory seemed now in sight, and was expected to be won in 1790. Meanwhile the French Revolution had broken out; and while the liberal element, including the Dissenters in general and a minority of the churchmen besides, applauded it as a bloodless overthrow of tyranny in the State and of corruption in the Church, there was also wide-spread and serious dread lest a spirit of revolution might cross the Channel and overwhelm State and Church in England. Any move to make a change in existing institutions was therefore resisted as dangerous.

Ever since the Revolution of 1688 the Dissenters had been accustomed to celebrate the anniversary (November 5) at a dinner, at which a toast was drunk to 'civil and religious liberty the world over.' When now toward the end of 1789 Dr. Price on this anniversary preached an appropriate sermon before the Revolution Society,⁸⁵ dwelling on the importance of civil and religious liberty, and of striving to render it more complete, and concluding with an eloquent outburst over the spread of liberty through the recent revolutions in America and France, and an expression of his bright hopes for its future, the spirit of the eloquent Edmund Burke was stirred within him. This previously liberal statesman, friend of America and of the Dissenters, now became spokesman of the conservatives in the House of Commons, and had grown more and more alarmed by the rapid succession of events in France, while many of the citizens were on the verge of panic. In reply to

⁸³ It will be remembered (*cf. supra*, p. 209, note 2) that these Acts made it illegal for one to hold public or municipal office without partaking of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the established Church, which many Dissenters felt they could not conscientiously do.

⁸⁴ Priestley listened to the debate, and afterwards wrote to Pitt, deprecating his opposition to the repeal. At the same time he did not hesitate to mention several further changes that the Dissenters would urge (*cf. Works*, xix, 111-134). Most desired were the right to hold civil offices, to enjoy full liberty of religious teaching, and to celebrate marriages in their own churches (*op. cit.*, p. 180).

⁸⁵ Cf. Richard Price, *Sermon on the Love of our Country* (London, 1789).

Price, therefore, Burke wrote his elaborate *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), attacking both the new French government and the principles recommended by Price to the Dissenters. Where Price and Priestley had seen in the Revolution nothing but good, Burke found little but evil and madness. Hence when the application for repeal of the Acts came up for the fourth time in 1790, instead of being received as had been expected, it was rejected by an overwhelming majority.⁸⁶

While political hostility to the liberal Dissenters was during this troubled period increasing in the country at large, bigoted hatred on religious grounds was being industriously fomented at Birmingham in particular. The Church of England there was numerically considerably stronger than the Dissenters, though the latter included many of the leading manufacturers, and had long been allowed leadership in the administration of public affairs; but some time before Priestley came upon the scene the clergy had begun to show a more bigoted spirit, and had grown overbearing in relations with the others. Relations grew more strained as time went on, during the agitation for the repeal of the Test Act feeling ran high, and the Rev Edward Burn, the very popular rector of St Mary's Chapel, published letters rudely attacking Priestley and his doctrine. It became apparent that a deliberate policy had been entered upon. But it was the Rev Spencer Madan, rector of St. Philip's, a young clergyman of ability, highly respected in the community, that now became the head and chief excitant of the reactionary movement that ensued, and by his utterances and writings appealing to popular prejudice persistently strove during two years to inflame the public mind against the heretics. With a political background of enmity to the liberal Dissenters, aggravated by the enthusiasm they had expressed at the overthrow of monarchy in France, Madan proceeded from his pulpit to make a deliberate attack upon Unitarians in general and upon Priestley in particular as their chief spokesman, charging both him and them with being enemies of State and Church.⁸⁷ Priestley was loath to engage in controversy with the clergy of his own town, but in face of all this he could not well remain silent, and he therefore

⁸⁶ No further attempt was made for nearly forty years, so that it was not until 1828 that the Corporation and Test Acts were finally repealed.

⁸⁷ Cf. Spencer Madan, *The Principal Claims of the Dissenters considered, etc.* (Birmingham, 1790).

replied in a series of twenty-two published letters.³⁸ In these he vindicated the Dissenters from the charge of being seditious, defended their efforts for repeal of the Test Act, pleaded for complete toleration in religion, answered in detail numbers of mistaken statements and unjust charges made by Madan, and gave a succinct statement of Unitarian principles, and a brief history of the Dissenters; adding also six letters in reply to Mr. Burn. These letters excited general attention, and were more widely circulated than almost any other of Priestley's writings. Madan replied in what Priestley characterized as 'the most peevish and malignant letter that you can conceive,'³⁹ and there the exchange of courtesies ended; but the fire thus set continued to smolder and gather heat until the middle of the following year, when it burst forth into a dreadful flame in the Birmingham Riots.

A feeling had evidently grown up and been carefully fostered that in view of political dangers something ought to be done to check the influence of the Unitarians and to teach them a lesson; and if attacks from the press had no effect, then the appeal lay to force, and for this nothing was wanting but a suitable occasion, which was presently found. It was but natural that when the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille (July 14) as the beginning of the French Revolution drew near, the friends of liberty should be moved to observe it at a dinner, as they had already done at several places in England in the previous year. Thus in 1791 the friends of the Revolution again proposed such a dinner to be held in Birmingham. With feeling already running so high between churchmen and Dissenters, Tories and Whigs, this was doubtless an unwise move, especially since the Revolution had in two years got completely out of hand, while Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* advocating the abolition of monarchy had enjoyed an enormous circulation. It later became evident that a plan had been carefully laid by the High Church party to employ mob force to silence the Dissenters at their strongest centre, that a list had been made of their meeting houses and of the residences of Priestley and their chief leaders, which were marked for destruction, and that leaders were to be imported to direct operations, trusting that an unruly mob would follow them.

³⁸ *Familiar Letters, addressed to the Inhabitants of Birmingham, in refutation of several Charges, etc.* (Birmingham, 1790). Published in five parts, May to June. Cf. *Works*, xix, 135-344.

³⁹ Cf. Spencer Madan, *A Letter to Dr. Priestley, in Consequence of his "Familiar Letters," etc.* (Birmingham, 1790).

in hope of spoils. It had indeed leaked out that some mischief was brewing, though nothing serious was apprehended, and a dinner was duly announced and was held on the afternoon of July 14 at the Royal Hotel in Temple Row facing St Philip's churchyard. Some eighty guests attended, both Dissenters and churchmen, and a distinguished churchman presided. Priestley was not present. All passed off quietly, and the party broke up and the diners dispersed about five o'clock.

By eight o'clock a crowd had gathered about the hotel in accordance with the plan, and being disappointed to find the dinner no longer in progress relieved their feelings by smashing all the windows in the place.⁴⁰ Some one then shouted, 'To the New Meeting,' to which the crowd then rushed and having wrecked it set all on fire. The mob were then led to the other Unitarian house of worship, the Old Meeting, and wrecked its interior though it was not set on fire. The cry next rose, 'To Dr. Priestley's,' and thither the crowd went, a mile out of town on Fair Hill. He was quietly at home with his family when a messenger came to alarm him that his life was in imminent danger, and he had barely time to escape with his family and was driven away to the house of a friend. The mob ravaged his house, destroyed his laboratory with its valuable instruments, scattered his library and papers, and finally set all on fire. Late at night, as the fugitives were just settling down to rest another messenger came to warn them that Priestley's very life was in danger if he should be found, so they drove him on some fifteen miles further to where his daughter lived, and he never saw Birmingham again. After two days of traveling incognito he arrived in London, the only place where he might feel secure.

Meanwhile the mob had broken open the prisons and turned the inmates loose; and the mad crowd, which had begun ostensibly in defence of "Church and King," was giving itself over to indiscriminate robbery and plunder. The magistrates, who at the start had sympathized with what was being done, and had been unwilling to take

⁴⁰ For contemporary accounts of the Birmingham Riots, see Priestley, *An Appeal to the Public on the Subject of the Riots in Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1791), in his *Works*, xix, 345-508, also in the Appendix, pp. 540-600; William Hutton, 'Narrative of the Riots in Birmingham,' in his *Life* (Birmingham, 1818), pp. 151-218; (Martha Russell), 'Journal relating to the Birmingham Riots,' *Christian Reformer*, N. S. II (1835), 293-304; John Ryland, 'Recollections of Dr. Priestley,' *U. H. S.* (London), IV (1930), 417-425; Bernard M. Allen, 'Priestley and the Birmingham Riots,' *U. H. S.* (London), V. (1932), 113-132.

any action to quell the disorder, became alarmed and endeavored to scatter the mob with the aid of special officers, but these were soon overpowered. They continued their rioting for two days more, burning various large houses in the suburbs that were known to belong to Dissenters. At length the magistrates sent an appeal to the Secretary of State in London for troops, and a detachment was ordered sent sixty miles from Nottingham, and arrived late Sunday evening. The rioters, after three days of burning and looting, at once melted away. There had been no loss of life except that a rioter was killed by the fall of a coping-stone from Priestley's house, and that some drunken wretches were buried in a wine cellar they had plundered, when the burning wall fell in and ten of them perished. The authorities, though appealed to, had made no serious effort to prevent disorder, and not until Saturday and Sunday did they post notices, saluting the rioters as "Friends and Fellow Churchmen," and politely requesting them in their own interest to desist from destroying any more houses.⁴¹

A half-hearted attempt was made to bring the rioters to justice, and out of a mob of 2,000 fifteen were arrested. The trial at Warwick in August was a mockery of justice, and little serious effort to secure conviction was apparent; yet four were found guilty, of whom two were executed in September, while a third was pardoned by the King, and a fourth was reprieved and escaped his fate.⁴² Five were also tried at Worcester, of whom two were convicted and hanged. In view of the excesses to which the Revolutionists in France were beginning to run, the weight of public opinion throughout the country was strongly against any that had favored their cause. Though at fearful cost, far exceeding what had probably been intended, the conservative interests had attained their end. The Dissenters were for the present crushed as a threat to the government, and for some time remained quiescent. The attempt was indeed made in the following year by Fox, their champion in Parliament, to repeal the Act that made denial of the Trinity a crime,⁴³ but Burke made an alarmist speech in opposition, and the motion was defeated. The desired end was not reached until 1813. In the three days and nights of rioting some twenty or more

⁴¹ Cf. Holt, *Life of Priestley*, pp. 170-172.

⁴² Cf. Manson & Ramsey's *Report of the Trials of the Rioters*, etc. (Birmingham, 1791); Hutton, *Narrative*, pp. 204-208.

⁴³ Cf. Priestley, *Works*, I, ii, 181 n.

handsome residences were destroyed, and a property loss was sustained by the victims estimated as high as £60,000. Under a law of Parliament those suffering by riots were to be indemnified, but the committee in charge of the affair reduced the claims between a fourth and a third; and against a total estimated loss of nearly £4,500 Priestley recovered only £2,500, and that only after a delay of a year and half.⁴⁴ The King, though professing regret that affairs had gone to such extremes, was satisfied that the Dissenters had been taught a wholesome lesson; and he manifested his approval of what Mr. Madan had so effectually done in the cause of Church and King by advancing him before the end of the year to the see of Bristol, and later of Peterboro. There were of course many in the Church who were far from approving what had been done in their name, but their voice was drowned by the cries of passion.

On the other hand, Priestley received many testimonies of sympathy. More than a score of religious, political or scientific societies at home or abroad presented addresses to him;⁴⁵ but not a word of sympathy came from any one on the part of the Church. One honor that now came to him he esteemed above all others. In recognition of the sympathy he had shown with the French, their Constituent Assembly had conferred upon him (along with Wilberforce, Bentham and several other Englishmen at the same time), the honor of French citizenship for both him and his son; and in 1792 he was also invited to be a member of the National Assembly; though he declined the latter honor as one whose duties he was unfitted to discharge.⁴⁶

The congregations of the New and Old Meetings united to worship together in the Independent Chapel in Carr's Lane until their buildings could be restored, and Priestley at first meant to return on the next Sunday and preach on the duty of forgiving injuries; but his friends advised him that popular feeling against him was so intense that he could do so only at the risk of his life, and the plan was abandoned. The discourse that he had prepared was sent instead and delivered by the minister of the Old Meeting.⁴⁷ In London Priestley was very warmly received by his friends, and as soon as it was clear that he

⁴⁴ Cf. *Works*, xix, 490-499.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Works*, xix, 355; I, ii, 126-180; McLachlan, *Warrington Academy*, p. 121 f.

⁴⁶ Cf. Holt, *Life of Priestley*, pp. 175-177; *Works*, I, ii, 190 f; xxv, 118 n; xv, 525.

⁴⁷ From the text: Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Cf. *Works*, xv, 475-493.

could not safely return to Birmingham, he settled at Clapton, about four miles northeast of the City, although it was only after much difficulty that he could find any landlord willing to have him as a tenant, or that servants could be had that were not in fear of him⁴⁸ His old associates in the Royal Society shunned him, and he felt obliged to resign his membership On the other hand old friends were kinder and more loyal than ever They made generous gifts that enabled him to rebuild his laboratory and continue his researches in science He also published, in two parts, his extended *Appeal to the Public* on the subject of the Riots in Birmingham, giving a full account of the causes and conduct of the riot, and vindicating both himself and the Dissenters from any charge of disloyalty or sedition Before the end of the year he was invited by the Gravel Pit Meeting at Hackney to succeed to the pastorate that the death of Dr Price had left vacant a few months earlier; and he also lectured gratuitously on his favorite subjects to the students of the New College there All in all his cheerful spirit led him to declare these years as among the happiest of his life

Nevertheless many circumstances were calculated to make him anxious After a year the minor annoyances had largely passed away, but the Revolution in France had in 1793 developed into the Reign of Terror, and the panic struck conservatives in England instinctively thought of Priestley as still a supporter of the Revolution He had been many times burnt in effigy along with Tom Paine, and had received countless insulting and threatening letters,⁴⁹ and his prospects seemed to be getting worse rather than better A reign of persecution had set in, and on even slight suspicion of any word or act that could be interpreted as treasonable, one was in danger of criminal prosecution, to which several of his friends had fallen victims⁵⁰ There was no assurance that a trumped up charge of treason might not be brought against him His three sons, finding all openings barred to them in England, had already gone to America, accompanied or soon followed by other friends⁵¹ The situation bore especially hard on Mrs Priestley,

⁴⁸ Cf *Works*, xv, 520-522

⁴⁹ Cf *Works*, xv, 527

⁵⁰ Notably the Rev Thomas Fyshe Palmer of Dundee, sentenced for seven years to Botany Bay (cf Belsham, *Life of Lindsey* pp 351-358), and barbarously treated and several others at the same time (cf Priestley, *Works*, I, ii, 221, xv, 530 f), all pronounced guilty on the slightest evidence or none at all

⁵¹ Particular mention should be made of the Rev Harry Toulmin (1766-1823) whose father, long minister at Taunton, became minister of the Birmingham New Meeting in

and but one decision could be made. It was therefore determined to follow his sons, who had sailed the preceding autumn. He presented his resignation to the Hackney congregation late in February, 1794, followed by an appropriate sermon and a statement of his reasons for leaving England; and a month later he preached a farewell sermon on 'the Use of Christianity, especially in difficult times.'⁵² They sailed from London early in April, and after eight tedious weeks at sea landed in New York to begin a new life in a new world. Here he was serenely to pass the last ten years of his life, which will be related in a later chapter as a part of the history of Unitarianism in America. It remains to summarize here briefly the character and qualities of Priestley, his contribution to the religion of his time, and his influence upon the development of Unitarianism.

Joseph Priestley's station in general biography has no doubt been determined by his notable contributions to the science of chemistry, despite the fact that he was but an amateur chemist, largely self-taught, who was nearly forty when he began his experiments, and that he conducted them more out of curiosity than with a definite scientific purpose, and never understood what oxygen was even though he had discovered it. Nevertheless his reputation as a man of science won him a wide audience when he dealt with other subjects, and hence gave him greater weight in the field of doctrine. Most educated men of the time were alienated from the traditional and popular concepts of religion; but the man who embraced the new principles of Locke and Hartley with the greatest ardor, and let them most influence his moral and religious thinking, was Priestley, who always held Hartley's writings with a reverence second only to Scripture. For him all evidence for truth, even religious truth, rests on the testimony of the senses. Hence the visible miracles of Jesus, and his resurrection from the dead, as revealed to us in the Scriptures, are to be accepted as evidence

the year of Priestley's death. He had been minister of a large congregation in Lancashire, but had praised the French Revolution too warmly, and soon after the Birmingham Riots found it best to emigrate to America in 1793. He settled first in 1794 at Lexington, Kentucky, where he was made President of the new Transylvanian College. Later he rose to eminence in the public life of the new States of Kentucky, Mississippi and Alabama, and became judge of the Federal Court. Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xiv (1819), 81 f; xix (1824), 179-181.

⁵² Cf. *Works*, xv, 581, 519-552, 552-559. On his last Sunday in England he worshipped at Essex Street chapel.

that his teachings are true. One's belief in these and similar *facts* is what he regarded as belief in Christianity.⁵³ Like Locke, he held that no other belief is essential to a Christian than that Christ was the Messiah.

In his later writings, which Professor Huxley considered among the most powerful and clear expositions of materialism and determinism in the English language, he set forth the view that man's nature is entirely material, that the soul is a function of the body and dies with it; and that there is no freedom of the will. These views brought down on him the charge of infidel and atheist; yet he did not deny a future life, but considered that the soul is raised immediately after physical death by a miraculous act of God. Beyond these philosophical principles, and the axioms that God is, and is good, he drew his religious beliefs from Scripture, taken as final authority, though he used critical freedom in rejecting from the record sections (like those relating Jesus's supernatural birth), which he regarded as accretions to the original text; and he confidently looked for the second coming of Christ within a very few years. Hence his opinions were a singular combination of some views surprisingly advanced and others extremely conservative. But he held that Christianity is less a system of opinions than a rule of life, whose end is the moral perfection of the human soul; and he believed that the welfare of the whole human race depends upon its acceptance of Christianity. In his personal life he was a man of deep devotion, who practiced and encouraged habitual public and family worship, reading of the Bible, and observance of the Sabbath, and his profound faith in the eternal goodness of God enabled him to rise triumphant over every misfortune and bereavement.

While in his frequent religious controversies his fearless advocacy of his own views did much to hearten wavering Dissenters in face of the overbearing attitude of the establishment, yet his plain outspokenness of what he held as truth, asking no quarter and giving none, his use of sarcasm and irony upon occasion (though he never stooped to offensive personalities), his insistence that the orthodox worship of Christ is sheer idolatry, and that the Church is but an overgrown fungus upon the body of true Christianity, did all possible to widen a breach that a more conciliatory attitude might have helped to close up. On the other hand, his sharp insight did much to clarify the course of religious

⁵³ Cf. *Theological Repository*, iv, 456.

thought, and to prepare it for the new light of biblical criticism; and in his studies tracing the development of the doctrine of the person of Christ he practically founded a new science — the history of Christian doctrine regarded not as a fixed deposit, but as a growing process. While he thus opened the way for progress in religious thought, yet his strong emphasis on the intellectual aspects of religion, and his grudging appreciation of the witness of inner religious experience, made it inevitable that though he might influence the development of Unitarian thought for two generations, yet leadership must in time pass to teachers of wider view and deeper insight. Our later chapters must try to trace the process of this transformation.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ For a careful estimate of Priestley's thought, cf. Tayler, *Retrospect*, pp. 432-447.

CHAPTER XVII

LIBERAL DISSENTERS UNITE TO FORM THE UNITARIAN CHURCH

THE MOVEMENT THAT WE have been tracing in the foregoing chapters took place among Dissenting churches in England; but before we proceed to follow their further history as an organized Unitarian denomination, we should take note of similar though largely separate movements in Ireland, Scotland and Wales, which were later to coalesce with it. In an earlier chapter we have already related the isolated case of Thomas Emlyn, minister of a Presbyterian church at Dublin, who when discovered to hold Arian views was prosecuted and imprisoned for his heresy;¹ though his fate was so far from preventing the spread of his thought that within less than a generation his Dublin church called to its pulpit the Rev. John Abernethy, well known as leader of liberal Presbyterians in the vicinity of Belfast. It was, however, not at Dublin, but in the Province of Ulster that the movement in Ireland was to make its chief progress. The population here was largely of Scottish origin (the so-called Scotch-Irish), descended from Scottish immigrants who early in the seventeenth century had been encouraged to come over and settle a district sadly desolated by warfare. In faith and usages they were of course Presbyterian, but many of their ministers were broad-minded men, trained at Glasgow under the influence of Professors Simson, Leechman and Hutcheson, who had outgrown the narrow dogmatism of their fathers.

Among these ministers early in the eighteenth century was John Abernethy of Antrim above mentioned, who has been called the father of Non-subscription in Ireland. In 1705 he formed an association of ministers for mutual improvement, which was known as the Belfast Society, and this presently came to have controlling influence in the Synod, and included most of its leading men. Its members were generally opposed to requiring subscription to the Westminster Confession, and came later to be known as the 'New Lights.' Controversy between

¹ *v. supra*, pp. 244-246.

Subscribers and Non-Subscribers developed, and seriously disturbed meetings of the Synod for some years until 1725 when, in the interest of peace, the Synod at Dungannon rearranged its Presbyteries so as to place the Non-Subscribers by themselves in the Presbytery of Antrim.² The following year the Synod, by a majority vote of the laity, though the ministers were almost equally divided, voted by a bare majority to exclude this Presbytery from the meetings of the General Synod of Ulster. The Presbyteries of Dublin and Munster still gave them fellowship. As yet the Non-Subscribers had not gone further than Arminianism, and the debate had thus far not been over doctrine, but over the matter of individual freedom.

During the next hundred years the two bodies had a loose affiliation with each other; and the practice of requiring subscription to the Confession was less and less insisted on until at the beginning of the nineteenth century even in the churches of the Synod ten of the fourteen Presbyteries were practically non-subscribing. At the same time Arian beliefs had spread widely in the Synod through the influence of the Glasgow College (later University), and of the Academies at Belfast and Dublin,³ as they had also done among the congregations in England ever since the Salters' Hall assembly. Among the Subscribers this aroused alarm, which was much aggravated when the Rev. William Bruce, an avowed Arian, despite strenuous opposition on the part of the Subscribers, was elected Professor at the Belfast Academic Institution⁴ in 1821. About the same time the Rev. John Smethurst, an English Socinian, was sent over by the Unitarians to promote their views.⁵ This led to a heated controversy between the two parties in the Synod which was waged for seven years. The opposing champions were two remarkable men, Dr. Henry Cooke (1788-1868) for the Subscribers and Dr. Henry Montgomery (1788-1865) for the Non-Subscribers. At the Synod at Cookstown in 1828 the Subscribers at length won a sweeping victory, and subscription to the Westminster Con-

² Cf. Alexander Gordon, 'The Antrim Presbytery,' *Non-Subscribing Presbyterian* (Belfast), no. 216 (July, 1925), 120-126.

³ Cf. H. McLachlan, 'The Irish Academies,' *U. H. S.* (London), vi (1936), 91-101.

⁴ This institution (precursor of the University) had been founded in 1815, and largely supported by Non-Subscribers, to provide higher education (especially for students for the ministry), for which it had hitherto been necessary to resort to Glasgow or elsewhere abroad.

⁵ Cf. *Christian Reformer*, viii (1822), 217-220.

fession was made compulsory.⁶ A meeting of Non-Subscribers was held at Belfast a little later, at which they drew up a 'Remonstrance,' which was formally laid before the Synod at a subsequent meeting, after which the Remonstrant ministers, seventeen in number, withdrew from the Synod with their congregations; and at Belfast, May 25, 1830, they organized the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster, constituted its Presbyteries, and in 1830 established a monthly periodical, the *Bible Christian*. Bitter feelings between the two Synods long persisted, many acts of persecution were committed against members of the Remonstrant congregations, and an attempt was made to deprive them of their meeting-houses. Those at Clough and Killinchy were claimed by both parties, and the cases were carried into court and decided in favor of the Subscribers in 1836.⁷ Other claims to church property or funds were also filed,⁸ but before decision was rendered they were quashed in consequence of the passage of the Dissenters' Chapels Act in 1844.⁹

In 1835 the Remonstrant Synod united with the Presbytery of Antrim and a few congregations in the Synod of Munster to form the Association of Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterians; and in 1910 a reorganization was effected, funds were established, and all the constituent Presbyteries, together with three unattached congregations in the south, were consolidated as the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.¹⁰ The total number of congregations (1947) is 35.

⁶ Cf. *Christian Moderator* (London), III (1828), 147-254. This monthly Arian periodical, supported by the Irish, was published in London 1826-28.

⁷ Cf. *Christian Reformer*, III, N. S. (1829), 482-486, 492-496.

⁸ Cf. *Christian Reformer*, IX, N. S. (1842), 181-183, 243-247, 306-310, 377-382; Thomas S. James, *History of the Litigation and Legislation respecting Presbyterian Chapels and Charities in England and Ireland* (London, 1867), pp. 391-480; *Irish Equity Reports* (Dublin, 1845), VII, 612-619; *The Jurist* (London, 1851), XIV, part 1, 137-142; *Mew's Digest of English Case Law*, ed. 2 (London, 1925), 130 ff.

⁹ *v. infra*, Ms p. 701. Early in the course of the Remonstrant Synod its adherents were drawn into religious controversy, not with the General Synod, from which it was now separated, but with a clergyman of the established Church. Early in 1834 the Rev. Daniel Bagot of the Anglican Church at Belfast issued a challenge to the Rev. John Scott Porter, minister of the First Church (now Unitarian), for a public debate on the Trinity and the Deity of Christ. Conditions were precisely drawn, and the questions at issue carefully stated. The debate was held in the First Church on four successive days, and was to be based strictly upon the teaching of Scripture. The debate was held before crowded houses, and as such things go was orderly and free from offensive speech. Cf. *Authentic Report of the Discussion on the Unitarian Controversy between the Rev. John Scott Porter and the Rev. Daniel Bagot* (Belfast, 1834).

¹⁰ Cf. John Campbell, *Short History of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland* (Belfast, 1914); chap. XVII, for its Constitution.

They adhere steadfastly to the Presbyterian name and form of government and have tended to be rather more scriptural than the English. During the first half of the nineteenth century they remained Arian, but in doctrine they are now frankly Unitarian, and their congregations have long affiliated with the Unitarian churches of Great Britain. Their history for now well over a hundred years has in general been one with that of those in England.¹¹

At the time when our movement in England and Ireland was steadily developing from orthodoxy through Arminianism and Arianism to Unitarianism, no such tendency was shown in Scotland. Indeed Unitarianism has for the most part found there but a sterile soil in which to take root. Hence instead of being able to trace a steady and coherent movement, we are able only to speak of outcroppings in some detached localities. We have noted above¹² the liberalizing influence of certain teachers at Glasgow in the first half of the eighteenth century; and this influence must have been felt in Scotland no less than in England and Ireland; for in the next generation it was reported that there was considerable commotion in the west of Scotland over the spread of Unitarian views among the ministers of the Scottish Kirk. A correspondent that had been traveling there reported in 1785 that he had met with many Unitarians; and that Dr. William McGill (1732-1807) and Dr. William Dalrymple (1723-1814) were decided Unitarians, and at Ayr had publicly preached the Unity of God.¹³ Robert Burns in his poem, 'The Kirk's Alarm,' bears witness to their heresy, and shows sympathy with it;¹⁴ and he speaks of the unsettling influence in Scotland of the works of Dr. John Taylor of Norwich. As early as 1776, however, a small congregation was gathered at Edinburgh which, though it did not before the end of the century finally adopt the Unitarian name, may fairly be called the oldest established Unitarian congregation in Scotland. The members chose one James Purves¹⁵ to be their leader, and at first called themselves Universalist Dissenters, though there was no Universalist movement organized which they

¹¹ For the above sections, cf. Clement Pike, *The Story of Religion in Ireland* (London, 1895); Campbell, *op. cit.*; Josias L. Porter, *Life and Times of Henry Cooke* (Belfast, 1875).

¹² *v. supra*, pp. 250, 321.

¹³ Cf. *Christian Life*, xxxiii (1913), 248.

¹⁴ Cf. *Christian Reformer*, N. S. xvi (1860), 484.

¹⁵ Cf. *D. N. B.* s. *v.*

might join.¹⁶ Purves evidently did not accept Unitarian views, for he later declined to fraternize with the Unitarian society gathered by Palmer at Dundee. After his death in 1795 lay services were maintained and correspondence was had with the Universalist Unitarian William Vidler of London,¹⁷ and early in the new century the congregation was visited by several Unitarian missionaries from England, and though still Arian adopted the Unitarian name as best describing them, and received aid from the Unitarian Fund in London. The church maintained a precarious existence for years, but in 1823 erected a modest place of worship and had a settled minister.

In 1782 a small Unitarian society was gathered at Montrose by Mr. William Christie (1749-1823), a merchant who had been converted by his own studies, and maintained services until 1792.¹⁸ He was joined the next year by the Rev. Thomas Fyshe Palmer, who had just withdrawn from the Church of England, and assisted him until he went in 1785 to gather a congregation at Dundee which (besides missionary adventures in several other towns) he served for eight years, when he fell victim to political persecution, as elsewhere related.¹⁹ At Glasgow in 1793, a Rev. Mr. Spencer, then a medical student at Edinburgh, and a Unitarian, at the risk of his life preached to a congregation that had hitherto held Universalist opinions; and after him William Christie, lately of Montrose, had charge of the now Unitarian congregation as early as 1794;²⁰ but after his removal to America the movement seems to have languished until 1808, when a Unitarian missionary from England came in the person of the Rev. James Lyons, a recent enthusiastic convert, who preached for some weeks to large congregations, and was followed the next year and in 1811 by Richard Wright, who preached to crowded audiences. A permanent organization was then formed, and in 1812 a Unitarian chapel was built (the first in Scotland), with the

¹⁶ 'History of the Unitarian Church, Edinburgh,' *Monthly Repository*, vii (1812) 348-352.

¹⁷ *v. infra*, p. 331.

¹⁸ Cf. Turner, *Eminent Unitarians*, II, 215, n. *Monthly Repository*, vi (1811) 193-204, xix (1824), 241 f. In 1794 he removed to Glasgow and took charge of a Unitarian congregation there, but in the following year he emigrated to America and eventually settled at Northumberland near Dr. Priestley, whose theological works he annotated.

¹⁹ *v. supra* n. 290 note 52. Cf. Thomas Bayly Howell, *Complete Collection of State Trials* (London 1809-28) xxiiv 238-282.

²⁰ Cf. *Christian Reformer*, xvi (1860), 489 f.

Rev. James Yates, M.A.,²¹ as minister. The interest spread to neighboring towns, and in 1813 a Scottish Unitarian Association was formed.²² Generous aid was given from the London Unitarian Fund, a great missionary activity was shown for several years, and a special missionary for Scotland was appointed;²³ though heated orthodox opposition was encountered, and ran to the very verge of physical violence. From 1815 to 1818 a memorable controversy was carried on, at first from the pulpit and later in published books, between the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw, a Congregational minister, and Mr. Yates.²⁴ It was conducted on a high and earnest plane, and was notably free from the usual acrimony.

From this time on for more than two decades the Unitarian movement in Scotland gave great promise, first under the vigorous missionary labors of Richard Wright and his contemporaries, and later under the inspiring preaching of the Rev. George Harris (1794-1859), both in his student days at Glasgow, and a decade later as minister there, whence he journeyed during the week carrying his message to three-score towns in every quarter of the kingdom.²⁵ But the Presbyterian form of church government had taken firm root in Scotland, and it made the transformation of old congregations to more liberal modes of faith, as had been done in England, well-nigh impossible. The

²¹ A distinguished scholar, educated at Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities, and Manchester College; later F.G.S., F.L.S., F.R.S., and Secretary of the British Association. Cf. *D. N. B.*

²² Cf. *Monthly Repository*, viii (1813), 536.

²³ *Ibid.*, x (1815), 389.

²⁴ The items were. Wardlaw, *Discourses on the Principal Points of the Socinian Controversy* (Glasgow, 1814); Yates, *Vindication of Unitarianism* (London, 1815); Wardlaw, *Unitarian Incapable of Vindication* (London, 1816); Yates, *Sequel to A Vindication of Unitarianism* (Liverpool, 1817) The whole controversy extensively reviewed in *Monthly Repository*, xii (1817), 292-299, 364-369, 412-416

²⁵ Cf. John Gordon, 'George Harris, a Memoir,' *Christian Reformer*, xvi, N. S. (1860), 125-738, *passim*. Harris was an intrepid champion of the Unitarian cause, perhaps the most remarkable preacher it has ever had, for his persuasive eloquence, his tireless labors in the field, his equally tireless pen, and his zealous activity in every cause that sought human betterment and completer freedom in politics or in social reform. After an earnest ministry in the North of England, he declined a highly flattering call from London, and chose a humbler field with greater opportunities of service at Glasgow, where he had a conspicuous ministry of sixteen years (1825-1841) and was known to the orthodox as "the Devil's Chaplain." He was the chief originator of the Scottish Unitarian Association, and the editor of two useful periodicals, the *Christian Pioneer* and the *Christian Pilot*. His last ministry was at Newcastle, where, worn out by his labors, he died in 1859, aged 65.

hopeful beginnings made by eloquent traveling missionaries would have needed to be followed up by the patient efforts of devoted pastors in order to get permanent results, and these were not to be had. The infant churches one after another succumbed for want of leaders, and by the end of the century a bare half dozen survived.

The development of the Unitarian movement in Wales went on in general parallel to that in England, though largely independent of it. The national language and culture of Wales has indeed tended to keep it somewhat isolated from English influences. Passing over with mere mention the name of William Erbury (1604-54), a Welshman trained at Oxford, who was chaplain in the Parliamentary army and had in 1646 to give up his office when accused of Socinianism, and whose case is obscure and must be regarded as quite sporadic, we may say that the first clear step in the direction of Arianism was not taken until 1726. At this period a number of the pupils in a Dissenting Academy at Carmarthen were inclined toward liberal views. Of these, one was Jenkin Jones, who revolted from Calvinism and after leaving the Academy was for his liberal views excluded from the pulpit of his home church. He therefore formed in 1726 a congregation for which in 1733 he built a chapel on his own property at Llwynrhydowen, a little hamlet about four miles from Llandyssul. This is commonly reckoned as the oldest Unitarian congregation in Wales, though it was as yet no more than Arian. From this church sprang directly or indirectly more than half of the Unitarian churches in Cardiganshire. In less than half a century it had passed pretty well into Arianism, and in a half century more had become Unitarian. This transformation went on in the liberal element existing in many of the old Dissenting churches, doubtless stimulated by influences from the liberal Dissent in England after Salters' Hall, as well as by echoes of the Emlyn case at Dublin. Thus before the end of the Arminian controversy the Non-conformist body had fallen apart into two antagonistic parties, and before Jenkin Jones died in 1742 six or seven ministers had adopted his views. Under his successor and nephew David Lloyd, the congregation had far outgrown its chapel, so that he sometimes preached in the open air to crowds of as many as 3,000; and the number of communicants under his care grew from 80 in 1745 to some 800 in 1779.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century considerable dissatisfaction arose over the conservative Arianism of the minister of the con-

gregations about Llwynrhydowen, and there were secessions from his churches. Out of these as a nucleus Dr. Charles Lloyd, returning to Wales from a ministry in England exhilarated by a more modern theology, founded in 1802 at Llwynygroes and Pantydefaid in Cardiganshire the first two churches called Unitarian to be erected in Wales.²⁶ While the churches above spoken of were by gradual steps moving from Calvinism to Unitarianism, twelve of the Baptist congregations had also *grown liberal and had been expelled from the Baptist Association* (1799), and together with others to the number of twenty in all had formed a General Baptist Association. Some of these later returned to the fold, and some died out; but several became permanently attached to the Unitarian movement. The views of Priestley attracted the more attention in Wales in consequence of his controversy²⁷ with Bishop Horsley of St. David's, and the articles in defence written by 'A Welsh Freeholder' (David Jones); but it took a half-century for all the old Arian elements to be outgrown or reconciled to the newer Unitarianism. By 1850 the fusion was accomplished, and from that time on the movement was united and progress was healthy. Development of thought continued to go on steadily, and was aided by the Rev. William (Marles) Thomas (1834-79), minister at Llwynrhydowen, who was long the only minister to preach an 'advanced' theology, and to interpret religion along the lines of Theodore Parker and James Martineau, which had come to prevail by the end of the century.

There has never been a Unitarian College in Wales, but no small factor in the history of the Welsh churches has been the Academy or College at Carmarthen, now known as the Presbyterian College. Soon after the passage of the Toleration Act Welsh Nonconformists opened private schools for the training of their ministers. The one to be spoken of here was at first supported from a joint fund of the united body of Presbyterians and Independents in London, though the latter soon withdrew from the union. The school they supported had a broken history for over a century, marked by a succession of different ministers

²⁶ Even earlier than this the Rev. Thomas Evans (1764-1833), probably the first in Wales to adopt and preach Unitarianism of the Priestley type, built in 1795 at Cwm Cothi a chapel in the interest of Unitarianism, and had already published in 1792 the first Welsh Unitarian sermon. This movement did not survive, but its influence probably affected that in Cardiganshire above referred to. Mr. Evans was later minister of the Old Meeting House, Aberdare (1821-33). Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xii (1817), 740-745.

²⁷ v. *supra*, pp. 303-305.

who took in pupils, by several suspensions, and by repeated removals from place to place; but since 1796 it has been established at Carmarthen. Since it has on principle been favorable to liberty of thought and free inquiry, and its students have come from various bodies, it has never limited its teachers or its students to any particular denomination, nor required subscription to any confession. Hence in 1757, to avoid danger of heresy, the Congregational Board discontinued their aid to it, and established an orthodox Academy at Abergavenny. From that time on the College, while still choosing its teachers and receiving its students without distinction, has been clearly liberal. Its students have borne a high reputation for ability and scholarship, and have been called to many Arian or Unitarian pulpits, not only in Wales but also in England, where Welsh preachers are highly esteemed. Many have also served orthodox denominations. Since the reorganization of higher education in Wales the Presbyterian College, while still of course maintaining its free undenominational principle, has raised its standards, and has been an associated theological College of the University of Wales (from 1906), which confers its degrees upon graduate students.

The history of the Welsh churches during the past two or three generations has been in the main quiet and uneventful, though one episode has taken place that aroused wide attention and will long be remembered. At Llwynrhydowen, perhaps the largest Unitarian congregation in Wales, the church was in October, 1876, without previous notice, suddenly evicted from the chapel on leased ground in which they had worshiped undisturbed for 150 years, and was compelled to meet in the open air. Throughout their history Welsh Unitarian congregations have been known for their political radicalism, and in this district the minister and some of his members had in a previous parliamentary election given prominent support to the Liberal candidate. For this they had never been forgiven, bitter feelings had long smoldered, and attempts had been made to blacken the character of the minister, the Rev. William (Marles) Thomas, who had been there for many years and was greatly beloved. The Tory landlord was a young man who had only just attained his majority, and while he was traveling abroad, being then far away in California, the head agent and lawyer whom he had left in charge of his affairs took advantage of his absence, and without his knowledge issued the eviction, based on narrowly technical grounds.

Indignation at this act, and sympathy with the persecuted, were at once expressed in all parts of the kingdom; and while a temporary wooden structure was occupied for two years, generous contributions poured in from near and far, and a handsome new chapel was erected in 1878. In the following year the keys of the old chapel were restored to the congregation by the sister of the now deceased landlord.²⁸

The present number of active Unitarian churches in Wales is 31, of which all but four are in Cardiganshire and Glamorganshire. Eighteen of these congregations use the Welsh language. In general two churches are served by one minister, with services alternately in the forenoon or the afternoon. Vocal music is much cultivated. Congregations are not large, but they are intensely loyal. They worship in Puritan simplicity, with a strongly biblical doctrine, in the spirit of Parker and Martineau. Their ministers throughout the years have been famous as teachers in schools. In Cardiganshire Unitarianism is almost the dominant faith, and the churches are so thickly scattered in the valley of the Teifi from Lampeter to Newcastle Emlyn that their rivals have named it 'the Black Spot.' They lie in small towns or in the farming country, and are devotedly served by faithful and self-sacrificing pastors, who are well educated and often serve two or three churches jointly. Their cause has for a century been much aided by their monthly journal, *Yr Ymofynnydd* (the *Inquirer*), published since 1847. The churches unite for missionary purposes in the South Wales Unitarian Association, succeeding a Society of Believers in the Divine Unity in South Wales dating from 1802, and in the South East Wales Unitarian Society (1890); and they are all constituent members along with the churches in Great Britain and Ireland in the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.²⁹

We return now from our survey of minor branches of the Unitarian movement to follow again the course of its main stream. The condition and prospects of the Unitarian cause during the closing years of the

²⁸ Cf. *Unitarian Herald* (London), Nov. 17, 1876, June 8, 15, 29, July 13, 1877.

²⁹ There is as yet in English no history of Unitarianism in Wales. Many valuable historical articles are said to be scattered through the files of *Yr Ymofynnydd* mentioned above, but their language makes them a sealed book to the present writer. Material used here has been taken largely from unpublished manuscripts by the late Rev. Rees Jenkins Jones of Aberdare and the Rev. T. Oswald Williams of Lampeter, from articles by Jones in the *Inquirer* (London) from 1898 to 1909, *passim*, articles in the *Unitarian Herald* (London), 1876-77 *passim*, and from George Eyre Evans, *The Lloyd Letters* (Aberystwith, 1908).

eighteenth and the opening years of the nineteenth century looked precarious indeed. The Academies to which the churches had looked to supply their ministers—Exeter, Warrington, Hoxton—had been dissolved or else were weakened by confusion, and in their place no new one was firmly established. Their chief spokesman and fearless champion, Priestley, had been silenced and driven from the country, and had left no successor. Lindsey's powers were waning with age, and there was no one in view to take his place. No authentic publication had been established which might hold congregations together in the bonds of devotion to a common cause and vindicate their faith against the slurs and calumnies of their common foes. The established Church, regarding them as its most insidious and dangerous enemies, had been encouraged by recent victories in Parliament to fresh outbursts of hostility especially against the liberal Dissenters; while the prevailing spirit of the time was in a ferment of unrest and apprehension bred by the French Revolution. In fine, the liberal element in Dissent, which under the fearless championship of Priestley and the inspiring example of Lindsey had seemed to become conscious of itself and its mission, now that these were no longer at the helm bid fair within a generation to fall apart and disappear from the scene simply for want of an able leader, an efficient organization, and a definite cause to sustain. How such a leader came forward, how the scattered elements were organized to cooperate for their common interests, and how they became conscious of a worthy mission, and loyally united in promoting it, must now be told.

The person upon whose shoulders the mantle of both Priestley and Lindsey was to fall was Thomas Belsham,³⁰ son of an Independent minister, and born at Bedford in 1750. He was the most eminent of the orthodox Dissenters to resign his position and openly join the Unitarians. He was educated at Daventry for the Independent ministry half a generation after Priestley, and upon finishing his course there he first served for seven years as an assistant tutor, and after a brief pastorate at Worcester was recalled in 1781 to be Principal of the Academy and Divinity Tutor. In the eight years that followed, his religious convictions gradually changed. Though orthodox by tradition, he was open-minded, and in teaching his students the Christian doctrines, he urged

³⁰ Cf. John Williams, *Memoirs of . . . Thomas Belsham* (London, 1833); Gordon, "Thomas Belsham, His Place in the Unitarian Movement," in *Addresses*, pp. 283-310.

them to study fairly the evidence on both sides, having no doubt what would be the result. The outcome was not what he had expected; for not only did many of his best pupils endorse the Unitarian view, but he himself was forced in the end to accept it. After fifteen years' teaching, therefore, he resigned his office in 1789, having in view no further plans than to retire to private life. Hitherto he had felt that 'a Socinian was a sort of monster in the world,'⁸¹ and he had had little or no association with the species; though as early as in 1779 happening to be in London he was led by curiosity to drop in at a service in the Essex Street chapel, and came away with an impression 'that it was *possible* for a Socinian to be a good man.'⁸² But soon after his resolve had been formed he made acquaintance with Lindsey in a brief call, though without speaking of his intended resignation. He had already twice been urged to remove to Warrington, in order to revive the moribund Academy there, and had declined; but as soon as his resignation from Daventry became known, he was pressed by Dr. Price, Dr. Priestley and Mr. Lindsey to come to the New College at Hackney as resident Tutor.⁸³ It was a difficult challenge, but he accepted it, and taught there until 1794, when he was chosen minister of the Gravel Pit church at Hackney to succeed Dr. Priestley, who was emigrating to America. He was very happy to be back in the pulpit, and he served the Hackney congregation with great acceptance until 1805, when he was called to Lindsey's old pulpit at Essex Street.⁸⁴

With his call to the pulpit of the Hackney church a new era began both in Belsham's life and in that of the liberal Dissenting churches. Priestley in his farewell sermon had warmly commended Belsham to the congregation, and had confided to him the defence of Unitarianism, as one that could be relied on to carry on his work in harmony with

⁸¹ Cf. Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 427, 609

⁸² Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, p. 146

⁸³ The College at Hackney was established in 1786 with high expectations, to supply the place of Warrington, Exeter and Hoxton, which had lately been dissolved; but its plan was defective, it soon ran into a crushing debt, unruly students disgraced it, and the College was closed in 1796 Cf. Herbert McLachlan, 'The Old Hackney College,' *U. H. S. (London)*, III (1925), 185-205, Thomas Belsham, *The Character of the Christian Teacher delineated* (London, 1804). Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 280-285; Williams, *Life of Belsham*, pp. 446-453.

⁸⁴ He had in the meantime been strongly urged (1797) to become Divinity Tutor at the new Manchester Academy, which had succeeded that at Warrington; but though strongly tempted he had resolved to quit the teacher's desk for the pulpit. Cf. Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 479-482.

his spirit; and with all the enthusiasm of a fresh convert he went at his task with intelligent zeal. He was a widely read and accurate scholar, and a convincing and powerful preacher, and by his sermons and his published writings he rapidly won recognition as the acknowledged champion of the Unitarian cause, which he unweariedly advocated with great success for thirty years. He followed the philosophy of Hartley, and in that and his doctrine in general he was a disciple of Priestley. Even before Belsham became associated with the Unitarians, their leaders had made a modest concerted attempt to spread their views in print, and to that end formed (1783) a *Society for promoting the Knowledge of the Scriptures*, but though of the thirty or forty members most were Unitarians, yet several (including one Bishop) were from the established Church, no denominational line was followed, and little if anything was published beyond two volumes of *Commentaries and Essays* (London, 1787), and the society faded out.³⁵ What the movement most urgently needed was a vigorous, clear-headed organizing leader; and one was presently discovered in Belsham, who realized the need so clearly and saw the opportunity so distinctly that early in his second year at the Hackney College he proposed the formation of the *Unitarian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Practice of Virtue by the Distribution of Books* (1791). The project was heartily supported by Priestley, Lindsey and others and won a large membership from all parts of the kingdom. Its purpose was to form a closer union of scattered Unitarians about their common interests, and to print and circulate books and tracts to promote their faith.³⁶ It fell to Belsham to define the object of the society in the preamble to its Rules. Since his purpose was to organize a society consisting strictly of believers in the proper unity of God and the simple humanity of Christ, uncorrupted by any kind of worship of Christ such as Arians more or less approved, and which he stigmatized as sheer idolatry, he shaped the rules of the society so as explicitly to exclude these. This limitation was opposed by some, but it was approved by Priestley and Lindsey, and was retained, though it involved the loss of a considerable number of members.

This step marked the beginning of a definite separation between

³⁵ Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, p. 176 ff.

³⁶ Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 296-304; Williams, *Life of Belsham*, pp. 434-440, R. Brook Aspland, *Memoir of . . . Rev. Robert Aspland* (London, 1850), pp. 184-186.

Unitarians and Arians. The latter had never seriously attempted to organize for concerted action, for they were averse to controversy and disliked doctrinal preaching, though a sterile effort was made in 1789 by Hugh Worthington, the Arian preacher at Salters' Hall, and seven or eight of the ablest Dissenting ministers in London were Arians; but from this date on their power and influence declined. Many ere long came over to the Unitarian position; perhaps a few eventually conformed to the established Church, or went over to the conservative wing of Dissent; and after a generation hardly an acknowledged Arian could be found.⁸⁷ The *Unitarian Book Society* (to call it by its shorter name) was formed in February, 1791, but its first public meeting in April was unfortunate. The French Revolution was still in its glory, public feeling was greatly inflamed, and at the dinner political toasts were given which gave great offence, and were noticed in Parliament, to the prejudice of the Unitarian cause. Three months later occurred the Birmingham Riots, so that henceforth for some years the society held its meetings privately, and avoided politics.⁸⁸ Nevertheless the society flourished surprisingly and widely circulated its tracts, which ran to thirteen volumes. It thus made the Unitarians of the country known to one another, and stirred them out of their long-standing timidity into boldness in defence of their cause. The time was evidently ripe for expansion, for in the next year a Western Unitarian Society was established in the West of England, where Dissent was politically very unpopular. Here again there was long and earnest discussion whether or not to admit Arians to membership in the society. The Western Society was in fact the only one to include them, and it did not become strictly Unitarian until 1831. Elsewhere the exclusive policy was gradually abandoned, or became superfluous.⁸⁹ The Western Society was very active, existed until 1874, and published a large number of tracts and books. A Southern Unitarian Society soon followed, and then a Northern and several other district societies, besides numerous Unitarian Tract Societies in connection with separate congregations. These were all kindled with the new spirit, spread Unitarian writings far and wide, and thus prepared the ground for the efforts of missionary preachers

⁸⁷ Micaiah Towgood of Exeter was the last outstanding Arian, and died in 1792.

⁸⁸ Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 300-303.

⁸⁹ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xiv (1819), 657-660, 743-750; Murch, *History*, pp. 556-570.

that were ere long to proclaim their gospel widely among the common people.

Belsham had hitherto been too busily occupied with his teaching and the care of his congregation to engage in religious controversy; but in 1797 a book was published by a Member of Parliament which, on account of its authorship if not on its own account, attracted considerable attention.⁴⁰ It was a layman's serious survey of the defects of the actual religion of the period as compared with the standards formally professed. It was not mainly controversial, though toward the end the author made some reflections upon Unitarianism as a source of practical infidelity, which seemed to Belsham to call for a reply. This he published under the form of letters to a lady,⁴¹ in which he made strictures on the doctrines of the dominant religion and defended the principles and the character of the Unitarians. His reply was mild, though firm; but some of the Unitarians, deprecating all controversy, took offence that he should have made it at all.

Priestley's old congregation at Birmingham at length opened a new chapel in 1802; and Belsham, as his successor, was naturally invited to preach the opening sermon, in which he clearly defended the cause of the congregation, now grown stronger than ever. At the end of the year, upon the resignation of his colleague at Hackney, he was unanimously invited to become sole pastor; but when in 1805 Dr. Disney's ill-health caused him to resign at Essex Street, and no satisfactory clergyman in the established Church could be found who was willing to follow Lindsey's example, Belsham was the inevitable choice. He therefore left the Hackney pulpit, to the great regret of his people, and at the end of March became minister at Essex Street, though continuing to live at Hackney until Lindsey's death four years later. Thus Lindsey's original hope of initiating a Unitarian secession from the established Church was disappointed, and the congregation he had gathered had by force of circumstances to coalesce with the Dissenters. It was an auspicious time, in which a new denomination was just budding and bursting

⁴⁰ William Wilberforce, *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System*, etc. (London, 1798). The author was prominent in philanthropy, and later became distinguished in the movement for the abolition of slavery. His son was later Bishop of Oxford.

⁴¹ Thomas Belsham, *A Review of Mr. Wilberforce's Treatise*, etc. (London, 1798). Answered by William Magee (later Archbishop of Dublin) in his work on the Atonement (1801).

into bloom, and in the face of bitterest opposition in both Church and State; for the next year was to see the beginning of the first regular Unitarian periodical, the *Monthly Repository*, which was for the next twenty years to render incalculable service in knitting scattered individuals and congregations together until their cause was solidly organized; and in the same month the establishing of the Unitarian Fund as the first effective missionary agency in the Unitarian name, which was ere long to expand into a comprehensive centre for all the church activities.

It was daily becoming clearer that one of the things that most prevented the movement from making rapid progress was the fact that it lacked a recognized public medium to speak for it and serve as a means of interchange of thought among the members. Priestley's *Theological Repository* had indeed served a good purpose, but its scope was too narrow and academic for it to make a general appeal; and the *Protestant Dissenter's Magazine* (1794-99), while mildly liberal, was not bold and positive enough to furnish the needed leadership. No one realized the situation more clearly than Belsham's successor at Hackney, the Rev Robert Aspland (1782-1845),⁴² who on his own responsibility, and purely out of interest in the cause, determined to establish a worthy periodical to represent the liberal churches. He had already learned something of the value and the problems of such an organ in his association with the Rev William Vidler⁴³ (1758-1816) who after a

⁴² He was at this time a young minister of twenty four, a recent convert from Calvinism. Born a General Baptist, and educated in Scotland for the ministry, he was by nature instinct liberal, and began his ministry with the General Baptists on the Isle of Wight. Active in the formation of the Southern Unitarian Society in 1801, and its Secretary, he came to know Belsham, and as editor of the *Monthly Repository*, and later of the *Christian Reformer*, he cooperated with him in the general organizations, and became an active and influential leader of the Unitarians second only to Belsham himself. Cf. Aspland, *Memoir*.

⁴³ Vidler was a minister of humble origin, but with great native abilities and force of character. Without the advantage of early education he had by wide reading so improved his natural talents that he became a preacher of exceptional power. He had had a varied religious experience being successively Anglican, Independent, Baptist and Universalist, and in 1802 Unitarian. He was now an acknowledged leader of the Universalists, who were attracting considerable attention in England, and was preacher to their congregation in Parliament Court, Artillery Lane, until 1815. It was here that Aspland came to know him. He had published first the *Universalists' Miscellany* (1797-1802), and upon becoming Unitarian changed its title to *Universal Theological Magazine* (1802-03), and then to *Universal Theological Magazine and Impartial Review* (1804-05), cf. 'Memoir of William Vidler' (with frontispiece portrait) by Richard Wright, *Monthly Repository*, xii (1817), 65-72, 129-136, 193-200, Aspland, *Memoir*, pp. 187-189.

period of groping had become a Unitarian. Aspland took in hand the magazine of which Vidler had been the unsuccessful manager and editor, and transformed it, beginning with 1806, into *The Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature*, thus entering upon a career as a Unitarian editor which, in addition to his work as pastor of an important church, he was to follow for nearly 40 years.⁴⁴

Aspland's purpose was to provide a periodical that might unite the liberal congregations in common sympathy and joint action by interchange of news of their activities, discussion of plans, and against attacks by the orthodox which at this period were perhaps more vicious than ever before or since. Also together with these things there was a selection of formal articles on religious topics doctrinal or practical, general history, political reform, society, reviews, and English or foreign literature. The editor had not the means to pay for contributions, but scholarly ministers and laymen gave generous cooperation, and not a few contributions were made by young writers whose names later became well known in English letters. Religious controversy was not to be avoided, but attacks upon Unitarianism were accepted as well as defences of it, the deliberate policy being to open the pages to both sides. Orthodox writers sometimes took advantage of this opportunity to make hostile criticisms, though no orthodox journal ventured to make a reciprocal offer. The efforts making to secure greater social and political freedom for Dissenters, and for Catholics as well, were unequivocally supported. By all these means the hitherto disunited Unitarians were roused to a sense of the importance of their movement, and Aspland became recognized as leader of the denomination. The number of subscribers in so small a denomination naturally remained small, and Aspland's work as editor and publisher was largely a labor of love; indeed it was nearly ten years before enough was realized

⁴⁴ At the end of 1826 it was deemed that the *Repository* might be made more useful to the denominational cause if placed under the management of a committee of the recently formed British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and the Association bought out Aspland's rights. The new management was a disappointment, and after five years the Rev W. J. Fox from being editor became owner. With the Second Series the journal became less denominational and more and more the organ of religious and political radicalism. Cf. the exhaustive study by Mineka, *Dissidence*, and an appreciation of Aspland's services as editor by Richard Wright, in *Monthly Repository*, xxi (1826), 718-722. Aspland also edited, 1815-44, the *Christian Reformer*, at first designed to be more practical and better suited to a humbler class of readers. With the enlarged New Series (1834-45) it succeeded the *Repository* as representing the Unitarians.

even to pay the printer, and after that the profits were meagre. But the service that the *Repository* rendered to the cause during twenty critical formative years, as a steady background to the efforts at organization and propaganda then making, was indispensable and incalculable.

A little more than a month after the publication of the first number of the *Repository* occurred another event of perhaps even more moment to the Unitarian cause. There had been for some time a growing feeling that more effective measures might be taken to spread the Unitarian gospel; that excellent as the work of the Book Society had been, still the word could be spread abroad by the living voice yet better than by the printed page; and that there were multitudes among the common folk of the country that would gladly receive the message of preachers to the common people. Yet no one among the leaders of the denomination could see what steps to take. It remained for a fresh convert to furnish the impulse, and that only after eight years of waiting.⁴⁵ Mr. David Eaton, a theological bookseller and occasional preacher, born in Scotland of humble parents, and with little education, left home at fifteen, worked as a shoemaker at York, and there became associated with a company of Baptists who had just abandoned the doctrine of the Trinity as unscriptural. As a leader of them he often preached to neighboring country congregations. He thus became known to the local Unitarian ministers Cappe and Wellbeloved, who introduced him to Lindsey, and encouraged him to publish a book on his experiences.⁴⁶ Later going up to London he engaged in the book trade and met influential Unitarians, on whom he so persistently and persuasively urged a plan for spreading the Unitarian gospel by missionary preaching to the humbler classes, that he overcame their objections. The leaders of the denomination expressed hearty approval of the plan, in theory, but urged practical objections: the time was hardly ripe as yet for such an undertaking; Unitarianism was not a religion for the multitude; missionary activity might excite the orthodox, and perhaps invite per-

⁴⁵ Cf. Aspland, *Memoir*, pp. 192-198, *Monthly Repository*, III, N S (1829), 357 f.; (David Eaton), 'An Address to Unitarian Congregations,' *Universal Theological Magazine*, N S IV (1805), 127, cf. 200-202, 258-260, David Eaton, 'Account of the Rise and Progress of the Unitarian Fund,' *Monthly Repository*, XX (1825), 337-340, 479-483; Robert Aspland, 'Biographical Sketch of David Eaton,' *Christian Reformer*, XV (1829), 227-235, *ibid.*, 345-348, Mrs. Cappe's Letter about him.

⁴⁶ Cf. David Eaton, *Scripture the Only Guide to Religious Truth* (York, 1800); *id.*, *Letters Addressed to the Rev John Graham etc* (York, 1801).

secution under the law; the emotional excesses of the Methodists had brought popular preaching into disrepute; the efforts of the Book Society might be relied upon to spread the truth as fast as it could be received; and above all the employment of uneducated lay preachers was frowned upon. Nevertheless support enough was offered, chiefly by laymen, to justify the experiment, and the result was that, after eight years of persistent urging by Eaton, on February 11, 1806, the *Unitarian Fund for Promoting Unitarianism by means of Popular Preaching* was organized⁴⁷

The old Dissenting congregations that were now slowly growing together into a new denomination had hitherto been for the most part made up of people regarded as socially the more respectable in birth, education and wealth, and they had made little attempt to commend their religion to those of the humbler sort. Early Methodism had in deed appealed to these with wonderful success, and so to a less degree had the Baptist movement; but the Unitarians had quietly taken for granted that their doctrine was not adapted to the mind of the common people. The founders of the Unitarian Fund now proposed to disprove this notion. Leaving the old churches to do their work in their own way, they planned to spread the Unitarian doctrine among the common people by popular preaching, addressed to the common man in simple language, by carefully chosen preachers who spoke the same tongue with them. With its project wisely planned by an able Committee and directed by its energetic Secretary, Aspland, the success of the Fund soon surpassed all expectations. The number of members and the support of subscribers to the Fund was encouraging from the start,¹⁸ and steadily grew, while reports of progress in the *Repository* kept public interest alive. Soon after the establishment of the Fund a missionary was engaged in the person of the Rev. Richard Wright,¹⁹ a General Baptist minister at Wisbech, who had already for fourteen years done voluntary missionary work in his part of England. Re-

⁴⁷ Cf. David Eaton, *Account of the Rise and Progress of the Unitarian Fund*, *Monthly Repository*, xx (1825), 337-340, 479-483, *ibid.*, 188-190, 163 f., 608 f., Aspland, *Memoir*, pp. 251-286.

⁴⁸ Early in the history of the Fund a gift of twenty guineas was sent from an English Unitarian in America, cf. *Monthly Repository*, iii (1808), 349.

⁴⁹ Cf. his *Review of the Missionary Life and Letters of Richard Wright* (London 1824), and extracts from his journals in contemporary numbers of the *Monthly Repository*, 1809-19.

sults of his missions were so satisfactory that in 1810 he resigned his pastorate at Wisbech and was appointed a perpetual missionary, and in this capacity served until 1822, when for reasons of health he returned to the lighter duties of a local congregation. In his missions he covered 3,000 miles a year on foot, traversed districts in every part of England, Scotland and Wales, preaching in 400 or 500 different places, and revisiting many of them. He gathered new churches, especially in the manufacturing districts, reawakened dormant ones, brought new courage to churches and ministers sunk in despair, and in twenty years had created a new spirit in the body of the whole denomination. What he did on a large stage numerous other local preachers did in narrower fields, either assisting him or separately. In order to furnish popular rather than learned preachers suitable training for their work it was presently felt that a separate Academy should be set up; though the idea had to meet the usual opposition of the conservative or the timid, who thought the scheme premature or the plan defective. The New Academy, with Aspland as Principal and Tutor in Theology, was opened at Hackney in his residence in 1811, and offered a purely theological course of two years (later extended to four). Twelve students in all were enrolled; but public support was tardy and inadequate, and when Aspland's health gave way in 1816 the Academy was given up.⁶⁰

At the time when these developments were going on, an entirely independent movement was taking shape in an isolated corner of the country. In the southeastern corner of Lancashire there was a little circuit of Methodist churches with a centre at Rochdale.⁶¹ Their members were mainly weavers or colliers, and they were ministered to by itinerant preachers. One of these was Joseph Cooke, a young man of promise who had been a traveling preacher for some ten years since he was twenty, and was now serving the Rochdale circuit. He was never a Unitarian, nor even an Arian, though a man of independent mind; but in 1805 his preaching was charged with departing from the doctrine of Wesley as to justification, and the Conference expelled him the next year.⁶² His friends in the circuit, who were many, were much grieved at this action, and a number of them at Rochdale invited him to

⁶⁰ Cf. 'New Unitarian Academy' in *Monthly Repository*, vi (1811), 372-377; *id. op.*, x (1815), appendix bound in; Aspland, *Memoir*, pp. 302-330.

⁶¹ Birthplace of John Bright, and cradle of the cooperative movement.

⁶² Cf. (Benjamin Goodier), 'Narrative of the Expulsion of Mr. Cooke of Rossendale by the Methodists,' *Christian Reformer*, ii (1816), 233-238, 461-467; iv (1818), 57-67.

settle among them and be their minister, and built a commodious chapel in which he preached to crowded congregations. A large number of them withdrew from the Methodist connection. Soon after this John Ashworth, a local preacher in the neighboring village of Newchurch, began to investigate the teaching of the Scriptures for himself, with the result that he too with a considerable company left the Methodist connection and built a chapel of their own (1809).⁵³ Henceforth the "Cookites," as they were coming to be called, devoted themselves seriously to the study of Scripture, of which the result was that they abandoned one by one the cardinal doctrines of their orthodoxy, and that without having known any Unitarian or read any Unitarian book they had arrived at Unitarian beliefs. Ere this, however, Cooke had passed to his rest. Worn out by his labors and weakened by his frequent exposures he succumbed to wasting disease and died in 1811 at the early age of 35. The work of the churches was not interrupted by the death of their leader, and they went on under the leadership of Ashworth. They were organized in a circuit with a dozen stations more or less, served in rotation under a prepared half-yearly schedule, by a like number of preachers or prayer leaders, all laymen from their own churches occupied during the week in weaving, mining or other manual labor. Meetings were more often in the early evening, and weekday prayer meetings were usual. Richard Wright visited the district and preached at Rochdale in 1812, and thrice in later years; but relations with the Unitarians were first had in 1815, when aid for the debt-burdened congregation at Newchurch was granted from Lady Hewley's Fund.⁵⁴ Hitherto these churches had scarcely been conscious, in their isolation, that a respectable body of churches existed holding the same doctrines with them; but from now intercourse between the two became frequent, the congregations became avowedly Unitarian, and a Methodist Unitarian Association was formed which was maintained until 1844, by which time the group had gradually coalesced with the whole Unitarian movement. Ten or twelve congregations became affiliated with the Unitarian denomination, of which half have in vigor survived the ravages of time. These Methodist Unitarian

⁵³ Cf. John Ashworth, *Account of the Rise and Progress of the Unitarian Doctrine in the societies at Rochdale, Newchurch in Rossendale, and other places, formerly in connexion with the late Rev. Joseph Cooke* (Rochdale, 1817); *Christian Examiner*, ix (1830), 857; Herbert McLachlan, *The Methodist Unitarian Movement* (Manchester, 1919).

⁵⁴ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, x (1815), 313-317; xii (1817), 59.

churches were conspicuous for having 'a lay ministry with regular exchanges of preachers, a profound love of prayer, a conspicuous zeal for Sunday-school work, and congregations composed in the main of poverty-stricken working men'; and their members were strong supporters of the Chartist movement and of the Reform Bills toward the middle of the nineteenth century.⁵⁵

In connection with these Methodist Unitarian churches it is natural to speak also of another and similar movement a generation later, that of the Christian Brethren, which was active from 1841 to 1848 or later.⁵⁶ Its founder was the Rev. Joseph Barker (1806-75), a brilliant and eloquent but undisciplined and unstable minister of the Methodist New Connexion, whose career moved successively from Methodism through Quakerism, Unitarianism, Secularism, and back to Primitive Methodism, who was inclined to go to extremes, and in 1841 was expelled from the Conference. Twenty-nine societies with over 4,000 members followed him, and formed a movement called The Christian Brethren, which spread somewhat widely in the northern counties and in the Potteries district of Staffordshire, largely among the common people. Their only test for members was the belief that Jesus is the Christ. Their beliefs drew them into sympathy with the Unitarians, who welcomed and aided them. They provided Barker with a press in furtherance of his effort to diffuse good literature among the people through cheap popular editions, and he published a popular edition of Channing's works, of which 30,000 copies were sold, and had great influence in popularizing his thought. When, however, Barker gave himself wholly to the cause of political and social reform, and left the country in 1848, his loosely knit movement quietly dissolved. A number of his congregations, and many scattered individuals, affiliated with the Unitarians, while others returned to Methodism.

One other source should here be mentioned among those that were gradually drawing together to form the Unitarian denomination, and that is the General Baptists. It was noted in an earlier chapter that quite a number of the pioneers of our movement in England who suf-

⁵⁵ Cf. McLachlan, *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ Cf. Herbert McLachlan, *Nonconformist Library*, pp. 152-183, 'The Christian Brethren Movement'; John Rely Beard, *Unitarianism Exhibited* (London, 1846), pp. 165-171; 'Antitrinitarian Churches in connection with Joseph Barker,' by F. Howorth; Travers Madge: on Christian Brethren, *Christian Reformer*, N. S. iii (1847), 501-503; *Life of Joseph Barker written by himself* (London, 1880).

ferred for heresy as to the doctrine of the Trinity were said to be Anabaptists. These began to organize early in the seventeenth century, and gradually increased until the time of the Revolution. Their following was among the common people, and looking only to the Bible for their authority, and emphasizing the right of private judgment in religion, they were of a tolerant spirit. After the Revolution they much declined, losing ground to the Methodists, and in 1770 the orthodox portion withdrew from the rest and formed a 'New Connection,' while the remaining congregations (numbering some fifty, more or less, in 1826) gradually merged with the Unitarians, though long continuing to retain their Baptist name, hold their separate assemblies, and practice the rite of baptism in their own way.⁸⁷ From this source came such leaders of the Unitarian movement as Robert Aspland, David Eaton, Richard Wright, and Joshua Toulmin, and most of the Unitarian missionary preachers of this period.

While these things were taking place at large, Belsham was busily occupied in his own field in London. As minister at Essex Street he was looked to as practically the leader and mouthpiece of the Unitarians. Thus in his sermons he not only powerfully maintained the Unitarian cause, and expounded its doctrines, but also discussed in the light of liberal principles certain questions of national policy, or measures debated in Parliament; while if ecclesiastics in high station in the Church made unwarranted attacks upon liberty or liberals in religion, none was so ready as he boldly to repel them, not hesitating to call even Bishops to account for shallow scholarship or ill-founded assumptions. But his predominant interest at this period was in the preparation of a new version of the New Testament, based upon a Greek text embodying the results of recent criticism. A project for a work of this sort had been proposed by Priestley in 1789, and was well advanced toward completion, when an important part of the manuscript was destroyed in the Birmingham Riots in 1791. Later in the same year, when the Unitarian Book Society was formed, the translation of the New Testament was made one of its main objects.⁸⁸ After some five years' delay it was decided not to make an independent version, but to adopt the

⁸⁷ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, x (1815), 320. In 1815 their Assembly identified their cause with that of the Unitarians.

⁸⁸ Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 454-472; also the Introduction to the work below referred to.

excellent one of Archbishop William Newcome, Primate of Ireland, as a basis, chiefly because it followed Griesbach's text, and to accompany it with an introduction and notes. The plan was taken up with ardor, and the work was published in 1808,⁵⁹ in three sizes, and later in several editions; and it was at once reprinted in America (Boston, 1909), where Unitarianism was already incubating. It included a valuable introduction on the progress and principles of textual criticism, anticipating many judgments later adopted in the Revised Version of 1881; but drew the fire of the orthodox by omitting as late interpolations several passages traditionally cited as pillars of trinitarian doctrine. Belsham had taken the leading part in the editing of the work, and he regarded it with great satisfaction. It was widely circulated in Unitarian quarters; but in spite of its presenting a much more correct text, many strictures upon it were passed even by Unitarians,⁶⁰ while to the orthodox its notes gave much offence, and by them it was generally scorned as a sectarian work, 'The Unitarian New Testament,' though it was never officially adopted even by the Unitarians.

The publication of the *Improved Version* seems to have largely absorbed the energies of the Book Society and to have lessened its circulation of tracts, though its former work was now complemented and surpassed by that of the Unitarian Fund. But in 1809 the successful example of the Religious Tract Society conducted by the evangelicals stirred up the Unitarians to organize a *Christian Tract Society*⁶¹ for the purpose of circulating cheap moral and religious tracts, not of controversial character, among the common people, thus leaving doctrinal propaganda to the Unitarian Fund; and this modest work, annually distributing many thousands of helpful tracts, was successfully carried on for half a century.⁶²

Along with the broader work of these organizations, Belsham devoted himself to his particular work at Essex Street. He reviewed and

⁵⁹ *The New Testament in an improved version upon the basis of Archbishop Newcome's New Translation* published by the Unitarian Book Society, etc. (London, 1808). Elaborate Review (by Lant Carpenter) in *Monthly Repository*, iv (1809), 97, 152, 216, 274, 384. Hostile review in *Quarterly Review*, answered by Belsham, *Monthly Repository*, iv (1809), 373-382, 415-429.

⁶⁰ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, vol. iv, *passim*.

⁶¹ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, iii (1808), 625, iv (1809), 114, 585, 694; Aspland, *Memoir*, p. 249 f.

⁶² About 1860 the society was dissolved and its work was amalgamated with the Book and Tract Department of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

revised his doctrinal studies of earlier years, which he had embodied in lectures to his students at Daventry and his young people at Hackney, and published them to the world in *A Calm Inquiry into the Scripture Doctrine concerning the Person of Christ* (London, 1811)⁶³ This work sets forth with careful thoroughness the scriptural evidence on the subject; and appended is a brief review of the Priestley Horsley controversy, in answer to claims of Horsley that had lately been reasserted by his son. In the following year Belsham published his very interesting *Memoirs of Theophilus Lindsey*, a work of abiding value, which the author regarded as his principal work. Far surpassing these publications in current interest was the passage at this time of the so called Trinity Bill. It will be remembered that the Toleration Act of 1689 did not extend toleration to deniers of the Trinity, and that the Blasphemy Act in 1698 punished them with civil disability, and eventually with loss of all civil rights, and imprisonment. It is true that during the intervening century this law had been well-nigh ignored, but it was still on the statute book, and there was no security that at any time a fresh outburst of bigotry might not demand enforcement. Hence the Unitarians, even if not legally condemned, keenly resented the reproach of being in theory criminals. Already in 1792, at a time when Government had been showing itself compliant with the requests of Dissenters, Fox, their champion in Parliament, had brought in a measure to repeal this law; but it was too soon after the Birmingham Riots, and it was defeated by a great majority. But now that several other persecuting laws had been repealed, when William Smith, M. P. for Norwich, and a member of Essex Street chapel, again introduced a bill for repeal of the old statutes, it was passed without opposition⁶⁴ or even debate. Yet, though there was no opposition in Parliament, and both Archbishops spoke for it, bitter criticism was expressed in high quarters in the Church. On the Sunday after the Act had received royal assent, Belsham preached an appropriate sermon of rejoicing,⁶⁵ and this called forth from Bishop Thomas Burgess of St David's *A Brief Memorial*

⁶³ Cf. Review in *Monthly Repository*, vii (1812), 668-677.

⁶⁴ It was entitled, *An Act to relieve persons who impugn the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity from certain Penalties*. 53 Geo. III, c. 160. It was passed July 14, 1813, on the twenty second anniversary of the Birmingham Riots! Text of the Act in *Monthly Repository*, viii (1813), 543. Royal Assent was given on July 21. The Scottish Blasphemy Acts were also repealed.

⁶⁵ *A Discourse preached at Essex Street Chapel, July 25 1813* (London, 1813).

on the Repeal, etc. (London, 1814), complaining that the repeal ought not to have taken place, and that the old laws ought to be restored, and making a bitter attack upon Unitarianism in general and upon *Belsham's Calm Inquiry* and other writings in particular.⁶⁶ To this publication Belsham made a due reply,⁶⁷ in which in polite phrases mingled with withering sarcasm he defended the religion of his brethren, and vindicated his own writings.

It was evident that churchmen were much concerned at the recent rapid spread of Unitarianism in the country, due as they thought to the repeal of the old oppressive laws,⁶⁸ and a concerted attack appears to have been decided on, for the Bishop came back the next year with a series of three *Addresses to Persons calling themselves Unitarians*⁶⁹ aimed at Belsham, but reviving also the controversy between Priestley and Horsley. At the same time the Bishop of London made the erroneous doctrines of the Unitarians the main burden of his first charge to the clergy of his diocese.⁷⁰ Since Bishop Burgess's see was in Wales, the Unitarians in that district naturally desired that some reply should be made to his assaults on their cause. Belsham therefore felt called upon to publish in their interest *A Letter to the Unitarian Christians in South Wales* (London, 1816), adding to it a reprint of letters he had recently published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in reply to the Bishop's *Addresses* above mentioned. He had by now grown weary of controversy, in which indeed he had never engaged by preference, though never avoiding it when challenged; but as he felt himself plainly growing older, he was glad to retire from it, and to promote his cause in other ways. One more challenge, however, was thrust upon him. The *Bampton Lectures*⁷¹ for 1818 were so full of abuse, bigotry, dogmatism, rudeness, misunderstanding and ignorance that it was impossible to let them

⁶⁶ Cf. (Lant Carpenter), *Letters on the Unitarian Controversy* (Exeter, 1815), v. *Monthly Repository*, x (1815), 192-195.

⁶⁷ In an Appendix to his *Discourse* of March 31, 1814 (London, 1814).

⁶⁸ Cf. (Burgess), *Tracts on the Divinity of Christ* (London, 1820), p. xxv.

⁶⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 379; answered by Capt. James Gifford, R.N., *The Remonstrance of a Unitarian, addressed to the Right Rev. Thomas Burgess* (London, 1818). Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xiii (1818), 638.

⁷⁰ Answered by Belsham in *Letters addressed to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London, in Vindication of the Unitarians* (London, 1815).

⁷¹ A famous series of endowed lectures in the field of Christian apologetics, given at Oxford annually from 1780 on. Cf. Charles A. Moysey, *The Doctrines of Unitarians Examined and Opposed to the Church of England* (Oxford, 1818).

pass without notice Belsham therefore replied to them,⁷² dissecting them chapter by chapter, mercilessly exposing their shallowness and blunders, and sarcastically refuting their misstatements; adding also an Appendix answering the unfounded charges that Dr. William Magee, Dean of Cork (later Archbishop of Dublin), had made against the *Improved Version*.⁷³ With these writings Belsham's public part in the development of the Unitarian movement may be said to have closed. He still printed, indeed, an occasional sermon, but the infirm state of his health warned him not to enter on any new projects, and he limited himself to bringing to completion a work that he had long had in hand, and regarded of high importance.⁷⁴ He had long been feeling the burden of advancing years, and with this work brought to completion he now felt ready to sing his *Nunc Dimittis*. In 1825 the Rev Thomas Madge of Norwich was called to be his assistant in the pulpit, but with waning strength he kept diligently at work until his release came in 1829.⁷⁵

Belsham came upon the field at a critical point in the history of English Unitarianism, when its leaders, Priestley and Lindsey, were soon to pass away; and without a competent leader at this juncture the movement might easily have disintegrated. But his strong and positive character, his competent scholarship, his force in the pulpit, his pen powerful in either defence or attack, his uncompromising boldness in speech, his ability as an organizer gave the scattered and disunited forces of liberal Dissent a valiant leader, who inspired bravery in the timid and confidence in the faint-hearted. Hence in his generation the bare handful of congregations that had ventured to wear the Unitarian

⁷² Cf. Belsham, *The Bampton Lectures Reproved* (London, 1919), *Monthly Repository*, xiv (1819), 495-500.

⁷³ Mention should here be made of Magee's *Discourses and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice* (London, 1801, ed. 4, 1816) reviewed in *Monthly Repository*, ix (1814), 417-424, cf. Belsham's criticism *ibid.* viii (1813) 489-501. Answered by Lant Carpenter, *Examination of the Charges made against Unitarians and Unitarianism, and the Improved Version, by the Right Rev. Dr. Magee Bishop of Raphoe* (Bristol, 1820), cf. *Monthly Repository*, xvi (1821), 109-112, 169 ff. It is in the writings of this period that the Anti-Unitarian controversy reaches its lowest level.

⁷⁴ *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle translated, with an exposition and notes* (London, 1822).

⁷⁵ Cf. (William Johnson Fox), 'On the Character and Writings of the Rev. T. Belsham,' *Monthly Repository*, iv, N. S. (1836), 73-88, 162-172, 244-253.

name⁷⁶ multiplied into a well-knit and efficiently organized denomination of something like a hundred vigorous churches which, from being ignored or held in contempt, had now won respect and recognition among the religious forces of the time. As a constructive theologian he made a marked contribution to the movement. His philosophical standpoint, like Priestley's, was in the main that of Hartley, and like Priestley he was also a determinist. His doctrinal system too was in general that of Priestley and Lindsey, and he held it firmly and with little change; but he clarified and strengthened it, and laid much stress on the vital difference between Unitarianism and Arianism, deeming the latter no better than idolatry; while he regarded Jesus as in all respects a human being, though the chosen servant of God, authenticated as such by the miracles that he did, and by his resurrection and ascension into heaven, whence he is to return again. As his final authority he held fast to the word of Scripture, but it was to Scripture as critically investigated rather than as slavishly followed. Thus he readily adopted the results of German biblical criticism, and early accepted the composite authorship of the Pentateuch, while he discarded the creation account as unscientific and incredible, and he rejected the gospel stories of the miraculous birth as unhistorical, though refusing to give ear to the attempts then being made in Germany to explain miracles away by crude rationalism. He was thus one of the first in England to adopt views of the Bible that are now widely accepted. His influence upon the movement was more as its champion and interpreter in the pulpit and in print than as a leader in organizing its forces, for he trusted to the influence of individual conviction more than to that of organized effort. Nevertheless he was founder of the first Unitarian association in England in which individuals joined in a common effort to support their faith and make it better known, the *Unitarian Book Society*, which gave their faith a definite meaning and an accepted name; and he gave a cordial though tardy support to the work of the *Unitarian Fund*, though withholding it from the *Civil Rights Association*. His name therefore stands beside those of Priestley and Lindsey as one of the three founders to whom the Unitarian movement in England is most indebted for its existence.

⁷⁶ When Belsham became a Unitarian in 1789, there were but two congregations of avowed Unitarians in England (Essex Street, London, and New Meeting, Birmingham); by 1810 there were 20; and by 1825 over 200, besides 12 in Scotland and 34 in Wales.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH ORGANIZES, EXPANDS AND BATTLES DETERMINED OPPOSITION

ALTHOUGH THE PASSAGE of the Trinity Act in 1813 was hailed by the Unitarians as an important step toward complete religious liberty, yet they realized that other ground was still to be gained. When Lord Liverpool said to Mr. William Smith, who had introduced the bill, that he hoped the Unitarians would now be satisfied, the reply was, 'No, my Lord, we shall not be satisfied while one disqualifying statute in matters of religion remains on the books.'¹ For there still remained several conditions that had long irritated and humiliated not only Unitarians but more or less all Dissenters. Thus marriage (save in the case of Quakers and Jews) might be performed only in a consecrated building and by clergymen of the established Church and with its rites, which were emphatically trinitarian; burial of the dead in parish cemeteries might take place only with the office read by a clergyman; births, marriages and deaths might legally be recorded only in parish registers; rates for the support of the Church must be paid by Dissenters no less than by churchmen. And now questions were beginning to be raised as to the right of the Unitarians to hold property or administer funds that had originally been under the control of orthodox believers. Cases of religious persecution had arisen that called for joint resistance, which Dissenters in general had been loath to offer when Unitarians were concerned. Unitarians therefore felt the need of some association to safeguard their interests; and in response to general request a meeting was held in London, January 13, 1819, at which, after full discussion, the *Unitarian Association for Protecting the Civil Rights of Unitarians* was formed.² It gave its first attention to the proposed reform of the marriage law; but more than sixteen years of toil and repeated disappointment ensued before the desired reform was achieved in 1836, and that through the efforts of

¹ Cf. Aspland, *Memoir*, pp. 415, 616.

² Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xiv (1819), 48-56; Appendix to vols. xv, xvi, and xix.

Unitarians alone, unaided by other Dissenters.³ The new Association was able also to be of much service to the cause in the protracted litigation concerning the property rights of the Unitarians, which were just beginning to be called in question; for ever since the passage of the Trinity Act, relations between Unitarians and orthodox Dissenters had been growing more and more tense, and the latter had apparently only been waiting for some occasion to arise on which the questions at issue between them might be definitely settled. It was in this period that two law cases occurred, whose decision was destined to have far-reaching consequences of the most serious nature. But before we take up the account of the serious contest that was to ensue, it will be well to trace the inner history of the movement a little further.

For the supporters of the young Unitarian movement the first third of the nineteenth century was a period of rising optimism and rapid growth, in which they had confident expectations as to their future. Although they were faced with growing hostility on the part of their rivals in the orthodox Dissenting bodies, and threatened with the loss of their church estates, yet their previous timidity had given way to bold aggressiveness. New societies were being established in all parts of the kingdom, and their tracts had been published by the million and eagerly read by the common people. An enthusiastic writer declared that the Unitarian views had of late surpassed all expectations, had spread more rapidly than any other faith, and bid fair to become the prevailing faith among thoughtful people; and he even suggested that Unitarianism was perhaps the only thriving sect.⁴ Hitherto the liberal Dissenting churches had, ever since the Act of Toleration, depended upon the Dissenting Academies to provide them with well-trained ministers; but of late, with the death or retirement of the ministers that conducted them, the Academies had gradually disappeared until, with the dissolution of that at Warrington in 1786, none was left. To meet so serious a situation a company met at Manchester even before the Warrington Academy had actually dissolved, and voted to establish at Manchester a new Academy, with the two ministers of Cross Street as tutors.⁵ The institution was planned on liberal lines, and was

³ *Ibid.*, xiv, 377-386, 446; xviii, Appendix; xix (1924), 366; cf. *Christian Life*, xxxix (1913), 211A f; Aspland, *Memoir*, p. 415.

⁴ Cf. Israel Worsley, *Observations on the State and Changes in the Presbyterian Societies of England*, etc. (London, 1816), pp. 60-66.

⁵ Cf. Valentine D. Davis, *History of Manchester College* (London, 1932).

openly dedicated 'to Truth, to Liberty, and to Religion,' and was to be open to all without required subscription to any confession. Though designed primarily for the education of ministers, for whom a five-year course was planned, far more laymen than ministers were educated here. Its leading teachers were Arians.

The Academy went on well here for half a generation (1786-1803); but when the ministers of the chapel came to retire, and it was impossible to find satisfactory local successors, the problem was solved by a change of location. The Academy was therefore removed to York, and now came to be known as Manchester College, York. It was placed under the direction of the Rev. Charles Wellbeloved (1769-1858), minister of the St. Saviourgate chapel, an able scholar in the prime of life, who had been trained under Belsham.⁶ He began as sole teacher of eight students and taught until he was seventy. Meantime the enrollment grew, and the Faculty was enlarged, most notably by the Rev. John Kenrick, F.S.A. (1782-1877), who with eminent learning taught at York for thirty years, whom Alexander Gordon esteemed 'the greatest scholar of his denomination,' and Martineau declared to be the wisest man he ever knew.⁷ Adequate buildings were secured, the churches gave generous support, and a considerable endowment was obtained. The students (of whom one was James Martineau) were active in missionary enterprise in the surrounding region.

Midway of this period at York considerable interest was stirred up by a local religious controversy. One Captain Thomas Thrush, a retired Naval officer living in an obscure village of northern Yorkshire, felt moved in 1820 to address to his neighbors a personal letter giving his reasons for not attending the worship of the Church.⁸ It was a mild enough *apologia*, and it made no reference to Unitarianism; but it fell into hands of the Rev. Francis Wrangham, Archdeacon of Cleveland, who made it a handle for his charges to his clergy the two following years, in which he poured contempt upon the doctrines of

⁶ Cf. Memoir (by John Kenrick), *Christian Reformer*, N. S. xiv (1858), 617, 683; xv (1859), 19-40; also separately (London, 1860).

⁷ Cf. Memoir by James Martineau in his *Essays, Reviews and Addresses* (London, 1901), 397-421; and in *Theological Review*, xiv (1877), 374-397.

⁸ *An Appeal to the Serious Professors of the Church of England* (n. p., 1820); reprinted, York, 1822; cf. *Christian Reformer*, vii (1821), 169-178, 194-202, 238-246. Cf. Charles Wellbeloved, *Memoir of Thomas Thrush, Esq.* (London, 1845).

Unitarianism and disrespect upon the scholarship of its professors, classing them as next to Deists. Captain Thrush published a letter in defence;⁹ but when he appealed to Wellbeloved as his friend for help in meeting the attack, which had mostly but repeated the long confuted calumnies of Horsley and Magee, Wellbeloved could not refuse the challenge, and published two series of letters (1823-24), marked by such decency of manners and such wealth of scholarship as to call forth high praise from churchmen themselves, and give him high standing as a champion of his faith. Wellbeloved taught his students during the whole of the time when the College was at York (1803-40), and placed his stamp on well over 200 students, of whom more than half were trained for the ministry; but when thirty-seven years of teaching had brought him to the age of seventy, and his chief colleague had already resigned two years before, the indications were clear that the College must again change its seat. It was now firmly established, its reputation had steadily grown, it had sent a steady stream of devoted ministers into the field; and with enlarged resources it now returned to Manchester, looking toward eventual association with one of the Universities.

At this period the Unitarians were finding much to encourage them in the evidences which appeared that their faith was spontaneously springing up in a distant land; for there were signs that the morning light was breaking in far-away India, where a native boy, born on the Malabar Coast in 1770 and early orphaned, was kidnapped and sold as a slave to an English captain. Being later set free he took the name of William Roberts, and in 1793 he made the discovery of Unitarianism by reading writings of Lindsey and Priestley. Returning to India in 1813 he opened a small place of worship near Madras and, quite independently of any European agency, formed a congregation of native Unitarian Christians, made up of poor and uneducated converts from native religions, with himself as their minister. He opened correspondence with the Unitarian Book Society in 1816, and for over twenty years received from England modest support for his chapel and schools. He published a Tamil liturgy, based on Lindsey's Prayer Book, maintained regular services, and enrolled more than 100 members. But obstacles were too great for one man alone to overcome, and when Roberts, after twenty-five years of devoted effort, died in 1838, and no

⁹ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xvii (1822), 365-368.

competent leader was found to take his place, his mission declined¹⁰

In the early days of Roberts's mission among the humble classes in Madras, another movement quite independent of it was developing at Calcutta, and appealing to the upper classes, who had outgrown their traditional Hinduism with its gross superstitions and idolatry. The leader of this was a wealthy and learned high-caste Brahman, Rammohun Roy.¹¹ He was born in 1772 and was well educated, learning besides his native tongue Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit, and when about 30 also English. In early manhood he had studied the Vedantas, the ancient scriptures of the Brahman religion, which he now determined to reform, being convinced by his studies that the endless superstitions and idolatries that were so prominent in the popular Hinduism were all corruptions of what in the earlier writings was a pure ethical monotheism. He was confirmed in this plan when he witnessed his brother's widow, against all persuasions and protests, sacrifice herself on the funeral pyre of her husband,¹² and he then and there vowed that he would never rest until the custom of suttee was rooted out.

Rammohun now devoted himself to the task of religious reform,¹³ writing against the popular religions and gathering about him a small circle of intelligent sympathizers, who met together for religious study and reformed worship. In the course of his studies of religious history he became interested in Christianity, and 'found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and more adapted for the use of rational beings, than any others that had come to his knowledge'. In order therefore to read the Bible in its original tongues he learned both Hebrew and Greek, and as a result he translated and published a little book entitled *The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness* (1820). The English Missionaries in India, instead of welcoming such

¹⁰ For accounts of the rise, growth and decline of this mission, cf. William Roberts *Letters to Belsham, Rees and Fox* (London, 1818-23), also in *Christian Reformer* ix, v, vii, viii (1818-22) and in appendix to *Monthly Repository*, xix, xx (1824-25), *Unitarian Fund Register* nos. iv, v, vii, and in *British and Foreign Unitarian Association Reports*, 1826-56 *passim*. Modest support was still given to work in Madras for some years but it never achieved more than a very limited success.

¹¹ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xiii (1818), 299-301, xv (1820), 1-7, Sophia D. Collet, *Life and Letters of Rajah Rammohun Roy*, ed. Hem Chandra Sarkar (Calcutta, 1914), Mary Carpenter, *The Last Days in England of the Rajah Rammohun Roy* (London, 1875), *The English Works of Rajah Rammohun Roy*, ed. J. C. Ghose (Calcutta, 1885).

¹² At this period there was an average of over 600 suttees a year in the Bengal Presidency alone. Cf. Collet's *Life* p. 118.

¹³ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xiv (1819), 561-569.

an introduction of Hindus to the teachings of Jesus, attacked it sharply in print, as the attempt of a heathen to mislead the Hindus by a garbled version of Christianity. The little book had indeed not only omitted the miraculous element from his selections, but made no mention of the deity of Christ, or his atonement, and had even opposed the doctrine of the Trinity as savoring too much of the polytheism that he was trying to uproot in his people. Hence there were several exchanges of controversial writings.¹⁴ But an unexpected result happened. To assist him in translating the New Testament into Bengali, Rammohun had engaged as his instructor in English the Rev. William Adam, a Scottish Baptist whom the Baptist Missionary Society in London had sent out to India as a missionary. As they worked together some doctrinal questions came under discussion; and whereas Adam tried to convert his pupil to the doctrines of orthodox Christianity he was himself converted by his pupil to adopt the simpler doctrines as to God and Christ that he had gathered from the Gospels. He therefore renounced his Trinitarianism, was dismissed from his position in 1822,¹⁵ and joined with Rammohun Roy in promoting a simplified form of Christianity in Calcutta. Steps were taken toward building up a Unitarian mission. A school for both races was instituted, a generous sum was subscribed locally toward erecting a Unitarian chapel, and for a permanent fund, and further aid for the cause was given from England. Great enthusiasm over all this was aroused among the English Unitarians, who were easily tempted to claim Rammohun as a convert to their faith; while they indulged in a dream of all India as on the way to adopt Unitarianism.¹⁶ The brethren in America were also much stirred by the hopes thus raised, though they moved cautiously. A committee of investigation formed in Boston prepared a searching list of questions to be submitted to Mr. Adam for preliminary information, and sent a copy also to Rammohun Roy. Both answered at length, and the whole correspondence was published.¹⁷

¹⁴ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xvi (1821), 477-481; xvii (1822), 393-400; xviii (1823), 473-479, 540-545.

¹⁵ Cf. *Unitarian Miscellany* (Baltimore), iii (1822), 77-80; *Monthly Repository*, xvii (1822), 755; xix (1824), 164-70.

¹⁶ Cf. *Christian Reformer*, xi (1825), 181-188.

¹⁷ Cf. (Henry Ware, ed.), *Correspondence relative to the Prospects of Christianity and the means of promoting its Reception in India* (Cambridge, Mass., 1824). For accounts of the Unitarian mission in India, see also appendix to *First Report of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association* (London, 1826).

Although Rammohun Roy had found Christian teachings more acceptable than any others that he had known, and was glad to cooperate heartily with the Unitarians to further a reasonable religion, yet he never professed to adopt their religion as his own, nor did he withdraw from his native Brahmanism, but remained true to his purpose of reforming it to its original purity. He continued, however, to promote their common cause, to support their school, to interest intelligent Hindu readers in the reform of their depraved religion, and above all to strive for the abolishment of suttee, which was at length brought about by Government in 1829. But the religious reform of India did not proceed along the lines first attempted Aid from England, though generous for a denomination of limited numbers, was not sufficient to build up a cause in a far distant land, and ere long it became clear that any religion of wide appeal must spring out of the native soil rather than be an importation from an alien world. Mr. Adam's devotedness and sacrifice were unequal to his task, and early in 1828 he resigned brokenhearted¹⁸ At this juncture a new plan took shape, toward which both Adam and the Brahmin leaders seem to have been driven.

A large number of progressive Hindus, leading men of Bengal, now formed a new theistic church, with its own services of worship and its own native preachers It was formed August 20, 1828, and became known as the Brahmo Somaj, and Rammohun, though he stood in the background, supported it heartily. It has continued to this day, carrying on Rammohun Roy's ideal of a pure theistic worship, in its broad teachings broadly akin to Unitarianism, though in its origin and traditions quite independent of it.

The European residents were naturally disappointed with the new movement, but the spirit and methods of the Brahmos were found better adapted to India than those of a Bible centered Christianity would have been; and as a native product of the Hindu mind it made its way among the educated Hindus of Calcutta as the other attempt could not have hoped to do. Thus the matter of establishing a religious reform on a firm footing was accomplished in the organization of the Brahmo

¹⁸ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, III, N S (1829), 447. The English finally closed out their venture in Calcutta in 1843, though they later cooperated with the Americans in missionary work there Some twenty years later Adam, who had now removed to America, became first minister of a new Unitarian church at Toronto, which was aided by £100 from the proceeds of the abandoned Calcutta mission

Somaj; and in the following year the suttee was definitely abolished. Late in 1829 Rammohun, who had for years been contemplating a visit to England, sailed for that country, being the first high-caste Hindu to do so. He bore the newly conferred title of Rajah, and held a commission from the Emperor of Delhi as his envoy to the King. In England, where he was received with the greatest distinction, the Unitarian Association held a special meeting in his honor.¹⁹ He furthered the interests of India in many ways; but after less than a year and a half he was stricken with fever and died, among Unitarian friends, at Bristol, September 27, 1833. His name lives in religious history as the virtual founder of the Brahmo Somaj.

The movement in India, although in the end disappointing, did much to broaden the horizon of the English Unitarians, as did their discovery, at about the same time, of the heroic movement in Transylvania,²⁰ and the knowledge that a movement of great promise was also taking place in America. Letters indicating active interest were also coming from various quarters on the Continent, suggesting that everywhere wide fields were white already to harvest. It therefore seemed more than ever important that the various Unitarian interests, instead of acting separately, each in a limited field, should be all consolidated into one general association. Such a plan had indeed been proposed, outlined and approved as early as 1812,²¹ and now the time appeared to be ripe. Hence after some preliminary consultations, the *Unitarian Fund* and the *Civil Rights Association* were merged and formally united in the *British and Foreign Unitarian Association* at a meeting held at the London Tavern May 26, 1825,²² and a year later these were also joined by the *Unitarian Book Society*,²³ and in 1833 by the Sunday School Association.

The new Association at once opened a public office in Walbrook Buildings near the Mansion House, with a Secretary in attendance, and took up its work actively. Great enthusiasm was felt about the prospects in India, and the word 'foreign' in the title was taken seri-

¹⁹ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, v, N. S. (1831), 417-420; *Christian Reformer*, xvii (1831), 281 f.

²⁰ *v. supra*, pp. 148, 149.

²¹ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, vii (1812), 431-433, 570; viii (1813), 133.

²² Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xx (1825), 314, and Appendix; *Christian Reformer*, xi (1825), 192-198.

²³ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xxi (1826), 313 f.

ously. A group of worshipers in a little town in Germany at once wished to join, and another on the island of Guernsey. A Unitarian congregation was formed at Gibraltar in 1830, and a little later an old pupil of Belsham's, who had formerly ministered to the Unitarian congregation at Dunkirk, visiting Paris found English and American residents who wished a chapel, gathered a congregation (1831) that twice outgrew its quarters, formed a French Unitarian Association, and published a little series of tracts in French. But an epidemic of cholera scattered the members, and thus the infant church, which had indeed won little support from the natives, was extinguished.²⁴ It was encouraging, however, to know that Calvin's old church at Geneva had abolished subscription to his doctrines, and had adopted a liberal new Catechism, and that Socinianism was reported to be spreading there alarmingly,²⁵ while the kindred movement in Massachusetts was said to be sweeping all before it.

The organization of the Association filled the denomination with new spirit. The old tasks were prosecuted with fresh vigor, missionary preachers continued to revive feeble churches or to plant new ones, many lay preachers took the field, especially in the industrial centers, with excellent results, new tracts were multiplied. Nevertheless the churches as a whole did not unite in support of the common cause with anything like such unanimity and heartiness as had been hoped for. It had been provided that the Association should be composed of a) district associations represented by delegates, b) independent congregations represented likewise, c) individual subscribers, and d) honorary members. But the congregations, of whom most had been expected, showed a singular reluctance to cooperate as such in the general united movement. A large majority of them seemed to be obsessed by an acute

²⁴ Cf. F. Kenworthy 'A Unitarian Chapel in Paris', *U. H. S.* (London), vi (1937), 205-212, *Christian Reformer* xviii (1832), 46 f. Not long after the discontinuance of this English church a French Unitarian church arose, much regret being expressed at the untimely end of the other. The cause progressed rapidly, especially in the Vendée, and a numerous society was formed at Nantes where a church was opened in 1834 and a journal was published, *Le Réformateur, Journal Religieux consacré au développement de la doctrine de l'Église Française et de Christianisme Unitaire*. This *Église Catholique Française* was in many of its outward forms and usages a reformed Catholic church, but with an ultra Unitarian theology which the English Unitarians of the time did not much approve, and it presently discarded the Unitarian name (cf. the similar case a century or more later of the *Iglesia Independiente* in the Philippines). Cf. *Christian Reformer* ii, N. S. (1835), 245, 325, iii, 137-144, 737 f.

²⁵ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xii (1817), 630-632, 711-713, xiii (1818), 22-27, 778-780.

fear lest their joining a general body might jeopardize the independence that they so highly valued, limit their freedom of thought or action, subject them to the tyranny of a majority, and bind them to support measures of which they disapproved. Hence at the end of the first year out of a total of perhaps 200 congregations only 34 had joined the Association, and the number at no time exceeded 80, and it gradually declined until 1866 when it was only 13, so that the following year membership of congregations was discontinued. Hence the Association was far less a union of Unitarian churches than an association of individual Unitarians; and its financial support came not half so much from contributions of congregations as from annual subscriptions of individuals. The total annual income for the first twenty-five years averaged less than £1,200.²⁶ With such modest resources available it was more than a decade before any considerable aid could be given to needy congregations or ministers.

Important items of unfinished business, however, were followed up. First in importance and urgency was a movement for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. This had already been attempted four times, and defeated by generally decreasing majorities, but last of all by the heavy majority in 1792. Now the Unitarians again took the matter up, bearing the leading part, and in face of a stubborn fight against it the Bill was passed on the fifth attempt in 1828.²⁷ Unlike the orthodox Dissenters, many of whom had long opposed it,²⁸ they also gave unstinted support the next year to the passage of the Catholic Emancipation Act, which removed disabilities under which Catholics had long suffered. An effort to abolish compulsory Church Rates was defeated in 1834, and was not carried through until a generation later; but the reform of the Marriage Law, which the Civil Rights Association had taken up sixteen years before, was passed in 1836, and thus abolished a grievance long and keenly felt.

These various activities illustrate the active part that organized Unitarianism was taking in public life, but their denominational concerns also were being vigorously developed in the same period. In 1832 they entered an important field of service in the establishment of what came

²⁶ Cf. Sydney Herbert Mallone, *Liberty and Religion* (London, 1925), pp. 36-38, 101-103.

²⁷ *The Test-Act Reporter, or Report of Proceedings*, etc. (London, 1829).

²⁸ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, iii, N. S. (1829), 426-434.

to be known as Domestic Missions. The work that had recently been developed in America by Dr. Joseph Tuckerman of Boston, of missions to the poor and ignorant in their own dwellings, bringing the influence of the Christian religion to them more by personal contact and sympathetic counsel than by public methods, had aroused lively interest in England, which was much confirmed when Tuckerman himself visited England in 1833. The result was that the Association appointed a minister to undertake such work in the East End of London as an experiment, and within the next few years Domestic Mission societies were established to conduct such work in several of the large industrial centres, and have continued to this day;²⁹ and around these has grown up a variety of uplifting social agencies.

The steady and rapid growth that the Unitarian cause was experiencing both before and after the organization of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association aroused the envy, and perhaps even sharpened the enmity, of both the Dissenters and the established Church. This antagonism to no small degree furnished the motive behind the Wolverhampton and the Lady Hewley suits as they slowly dragged their way through the courts, and it finally led to an open rupture of relations that had hitherto been friendly. Ever since the Revolution of 1688 the three main denominations of Dissenters—Presbyterians, Independents (or Congregationals), and Baptists—had usually acted together in comparative harmony in what concerned their common interests; and the Presbyterians had often borne the leading part in the long struggle of the Dissenting interest for equal rights and complete freedom. But the recent activity of the Presbyterians, now coming to be more commonly known as Unitarians, their bold preaching of their doctrines, and most of all the hostility aroused by the pending litigation, had increased orthodox antagonism against them. The culmination of this came when the 'General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Three Denominations' in London (organized in 1736) ousted from office, admittedly on account of his heretical beliefs, the Unitarian Dr. Thomas Rees, who had for seven years served as Secretary with conspicuous ability. The Presbyterian members, therefore, felt that they could no longer with self-respect continue their mem-

²⁹ Cf. Anne Holt, *A Ministry to the Poor* (Liverpool, 1936); an account of the Liverpool Domestic Mission; Valentine D. Davis, *The London Domestic Mission Society* (London, 1935).

bership in the union, and voted to withdraw from it; and they therefore claimed, and were given by the Government, recognition as a separate group from the other United Dissenters, and hence were granted access to the throne, and were received by the young Queen Victoria.⁸⁰ Thus the last bond was severed that had long held together the two wings of the old Dissent.⁸¹

In Liverpool in this period the Unitarians were manifesting so much vigor, with two large congregations under ministers of distinguished ability, and a membership eminent in civic and social affairs, that the Anglican clergymen grew alarmed, and felt that some concerted action must be taken to warn Unitarians and the public at large against the danger in which they stood. Early in 1839, therefore, the Rev. Fielding Ould, minister of Christ Church, published in the press an address 'to all who call themselves Unitarians in the town and neighborhood of Liverpool,' to attend a series of lectures in which he and his reverend brethren would undertake to expose the dangerous errors of the Unitarian system. A syllabus of thirteen lectures was presented, to be given by thirteen selected clergymen of Liverpool or vicinity. The three Unitarian ministers (James Martineau, John Hamilton Thom, Henry Giles) were invited to attend the lectures in person, and to urge their people to do the same, and they did so regularly. But when they proposed to give thirteen addresses in turn, setting forth the Unitarian view, the others declined to cooperate in a discussion or to attend, but would on the contrary do all in their power to dissuade others from attending. It was arranged that the proposed addresses should be given on successive Wednesday evenings, and that the corresponding answers should be given on the following Tuesday evenings. Both series were attended by crowds; and the addresses were promptly printed as pamphlets, with appropriate prefaces and appendixes.⁸² All Liver-

⁸⁰ Cf. Aspland, *Memoir*, p. 544.

⁸¹ Cf. *The Case of the Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Presbyterian Denomination*, etc. (London, 1837), *Christian Reformer*, III, N. S. (1836), 276, 351, 422, 478; IV (1837), 19-37, 90-107, 645 f.

⁸² The two series were collected and published in stately volumes entitled, *Unitarianism Confuted*, and *Unitarianism Defended* (Liverpool, 1839). The Unitarian series was reprinted (London, 1876). Cf. *Christian Reformer*, VI, N. S. (1839), 115-175, 202 f., 235-243, 314-323; Charles Wicksteed, 'The Liverpool Unitarian Controversy,' *Theological Review*, xiv (1877), 85-106; A. W. Jackson, *James Martineau* (Boston, 1900), 57-71; James Drummond and Charles Barnes Upton, *Life and Letters of James Martineau* (London, 1902), 97-105; J. Estlin Carpenter, *James Martineau, Theologian and Teacher* (London, 1905), pp. 177-189.

pool was profoundly stirred by the controversy, and its echoes spread far; but if there was any hope of making numerous converts on either side, that hope in the circumstances was bound to be disappointed. Two families were said to have come over to the Unitarians, and none is reported in the opposite direction. But, as is wont to be the case in controversies, existing convictions were cleared and confirmed, and old antagonisms were sharpened. The orthodox doctrines were re-affirmed, with the customary appeals to Scripture and to the traditions of past centuries; the Unitarian views were clarified and restated to correspond with the results of recent biblical criticism and the demands of reason, and were set forth with a vigor and fearlessness that gave direction to Unitarian thinking for the rest of the century.

We have now to come back to the struggle of the Unitarians over their disputed right to possess their ancient chapels and other properties. Complaints had been made more and more frequently by the orthodox Dissenters that Unitarian congregations were occupying chapels or holding funds that by legal right ought to be in orthodox hands, and only a suitable occasion was required to bring the matter into the law courts for definite settlement. Such an occasion occurred in 1816 in the John Street chapel at Wolverhampton near Birmingham.³³ This chapel had been erected in 1701 by a congregation of English Presbyterians 'for the worship and service of God and the use of Protestant Dissenters,' without distinction. The founders were doubtless orthodox, but in the course of a century the views of the congregation had insensibly changed until they were predominantly Unitarian. In 1818 a professed Unitarian, Mr. John Seward, was appointed minister for three years; but before this term expired his religious views changed and he avowed himself a Trinitarian. The congregation therefore requested him to withdraw from his position, granting him three months in which to find another place, and to this he consented. In the meantime, however, a sometime member, who had been appointed Trustee in 1782, but had seceded in 1783 upon the election of a Unitarian as minister, and without ever resigning his trust had joined an orthodox congregation, now came forward claiming to be the only living trustee, and persuaded the minister to stand his ground and resist ejectment. Some scenes of disorder ensued concerning possession

³³ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xii (1817), 430-441, 494 f, 666-668; xiii (1818), 95-101; *Christian Reformer*, iii, N. S. (1829), 113-118.

of the pulpit, and the case was taken into court, where it was bitterly contested, and carried on from court to court, with decisions steadily running against the Unitarians, who presently withdrew and built another chapel, leaving the orthodox in possession of the old one. But even after a decision of the case had practically been reached, the court postponed pronouncing judgment for a considerable time, awaiting decision of a similar but more important case pending in the House of Lords.³⁴ At length, after the lapse of nineteen years, it was decreed in 1842 that the Unitarians had no legal right to the property.³⁵ The costs of the long litigation far exceeded the value of the property, the chapel was sold under the hammer, the deficit was charged to the litigants, and after a short occupancy by the Baptists the Church of England secured the chapel as a chapel of ease to St. Peter's.

During all the time that this case was pending, a dark and ominous cloud overshadowed the Unitarians, for it was realized that the case was of vital importance, since it might tend to set a precedent involving the title to many old chapels once orthodox and now in Unitarian hands. On this ground, indeed, the Congregationals sought the assistance of their brethren in prosecuting the suit; and only a case was required which might definitely call for the statement of a general principle applicable to any similar situation. Such a case was the outgrowth of an occurrence at Manchester in the summer of 1824, when a testimonial dinner was given for the Rev. John Grundy, minister of Cross Street Chapel, who was about to remove to Liverpool. On this occasion one of the after-dinner speakers was the Rev. George Harris, and in the course of an eloquent speech he allowed himself to draw a contrast between the spirit of orthodoxy and that of Unitarianism in terms which, when reported in full in the press, gave the orthodox great and just offence. A heated newspaper controversy ensued and was protracted for four months; and when in the course of this it was intimated that Unitarians were illegally holding many chapels that in their origin were properly orthodox, their opponents were virtually

³⁴ The case of Lady Hewley's Charities, to be related below.

³⁵ Cf. T. S. James, *History of the Litigation*, pp. 209-226; *Presbyterian Endowments: Report of the Hearing of the Case of the Wolverhampton Meeting-house . . . at Westminster Hall, January 22-26, 1836* (London, 1836). For the decree, see *Parliamentary Debates on the Dissenters' Chapels Bill* (London, 1844), p. 59, n., f.

challenged to prove the charge in the courts.³⁶ The challenge was accepted; and after due consultation for some time it was decided to probe the matter by inquiring into the administration of a famous charity that Dame Sarah Hewley, a Presbyterian of York, had founded in 1704 for the benefit of 'poor and godly preachers of Christ's holy Gospel,' and for certain kindred purposes. She had prescribed no doctrinal conditions; but while the trust far antedated the existence of Unitarianism as an acknowledged faith, it was well known that it had long been administered by trustees known to be Unitarian, and too often in the interest of Unitarian persons or causes, and as the fund amounted to perhaps £100,000, and was rapidly growing in value, it was increasingly covered by the orthodox. At the instigation, therefore, of a group of leading Independents (Congregationals) as complainants, suit was at length brought in 1830 against the trustees of the charity, seeking to establish the right of orthodox Dissenters alone to manage and participate in the charity.

The case was stubbornly fought, for both parties realized that grave issues were at stake. The Unitarians in particular foresaw that if they lost this case, then scores of other suits might follow and deprive them of chapels that they had occupied without opposition for more than a hundred years. The recently flourishing denomination might thus at a blow be reduced to a mere handful of young and feeble congregations. It was rumored indeed that a group of Unitarians in Lancashire were in that event already contemplating emigration to Texas. To forestall such an outcome the Unitarians bent every effort to prove their unbroken line of descent from the Presbyterians of the seventeenth century. They industriously revived their long-neglected name of Presbyterians, which now since the beginning of the century had been generally supplanted by that of Unitarians. They laid great stress on the consideration that their Presbyterian fathers held their church properties under "open trusts," intending thereby to refrain from any imposition of man-made tests or creeds, and not binding them to any beliefs narrower than Scripture;³⁷ and they sought to show that so far as their

³⁶ Cf. (George Hadfield), *The Manchester Socinian Controversy* (London, 1825) written to stir up the orthodox to recover their properties. Cf. McLachlan, *Nonconformist Library*.

³⁷ Cf. W. Whitaker, 'The Open-Trust Myth,' *U. H. S.* (London), 1, 303-314. As a matter of fact this practice was not peculiar to the Presbyterians, since most Dissenting trusts of the period were left "open," orthodox beliefs being assumed as already safe guarded under existing laws.

beliefs had changed it had been by gradual degrees of normal growth, and with no conscious break of continuity. The case was first tried in the Chancery Court before Vice-Chancellor Shadwell, who in December, 1883, decreed in substance 'that no persons who deny the divinity of Christ, etc., are entitled to participate in Lady Hewley's charity, and that the trustees existing must be removed.'³⁸ The trustees at once appealed to the Lord Chancellor, who in February, 1836, affirmed the Vice-Chancellor's judgment.³⁹ The trustees appealed again to the House of Lords, where the case was argued for six days in May and June, 1839. The judges held the case under consideration for three years more, and final judgment was not pronounced until August, 1842, by the Chancellor, Lord Lyndhurst, who affirmed the previous decrees, six of the seven judges concurring.⁴⁰ The value of the Hewley Fund had greatly appreciated during the nearly twelve years of litigation, and the income from it had grown from £2,800 to £4,200 annually; but the costs of the litigation amounted to more than £18,000, of which some two thirds came out of the charity, and the rest had to be paid by the trustees personally.⁴¹ The judges did not base their decision on doctrinal grounds, but held consistently to the principle that a trust could not now be held for any use that would have been illegal at the time when it was made;⁴² and it soon became evident that they regretted that they had felt bound to give a decision that would be almost certain to result in great injustice to the defeated party.

³⁸ Cf. *Lady Hewley's Charities*, p. vii.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

⁴⁰ Cf. James, *History of the Litigation*, pp. 360, 362. It was thus not until November, 1942 that the final decree in the Wolverhampton Chapel case was at length published.

⁴¹ Cf. *Parliamentary Debates on the Dissenters' Chapels Bill* (London, 1844), pp. 17, 18, n.

⁴² For details of the Lady Hewley case, cf. James, *History of Litigation*; sharply reviewed by John Gordon, *Nonconformity and Liberty* (London, 1867); answered in turn in Addendum to James, *op. cit.* See also the official reports: *Lady Hewley's Charities: a Full Report of the Hearing in the House of Lords . . . on the Appeal of the Trustees* (London, 1839); Clark & Fennelly's *Appeal Cases . . . decided in the House of Lords during the Session, 1842*, vol. IX, part iii (London, 1842); *Christian Reformer*, vi, N. S. (1839), full report of proceedings in the House of Lords, *passim*.

A voluminous controversial literature appeared while the case was in process. See especially Joseph Hunter, *An Historical Defence of the Trustees of Lady Hewley's Foundations* (London, 1834); (Thomas Falconer), *The History, Opinions, and Present Legal Position of the English Presbyterians* (London, 1834); Joshua Wilson, *An Historical Inquiry concerning the Principles, Opinions and Usages of the English Presbyterians*, etc. (London, 1835); *English Presbyterian Charities* (reviewing the above), (London, 1835); James Brooks, *The Prevalence of Arrianism amongst English Presbyterians*, etc. (London, 1837); (Joseph Hunter), *Historical Proofs and Illustrations* (London, 1838).

The decision of the case gave unfeigned delight to the orthodox, but filled the Unitarians with dismay; for the law now left them no valid title to their properties, and no right even to keep them in repair, nor yet to occupy them save for a little time on sufferance. Parties were understood to be ready and eager to begin proceedings, and there seemed good reason to expect that as soon as plans could be made a large number of suits would be brought against the congregations now worshipping in the Unitarian chapels. In Ireland, indeed, one or two cases involving church properties had already been determined against the Arian party, and others were pending; and it was feared that the attempt might be made to seize all the Remonstrant chapels.⁴³ In England also, in view of the judgment in the Lady Hewley case, steps were already being taken in 1843 to attack another great Presbyterian trust, that of Dr. Williams,⁴⁴ though the Attorney-General refused to sanction the proposed suit.⁴⁵ Whether it was because they thought that the Congregational churches might be planning soon to appropriate Unitarian chapels to their own uses, or because it was suspected that they wished merely by legal means to inflict a crushing blow upon their rivals, or for some other reason, the Unitarians anxiously faced the possibility of their being ejected from more than 200 chapels in which they had worshiped undisturbed for a hundred years, and of seeing their denomination reduced to only twenty or thirty mostly unimportant congregations. In any case it was clear that there was no escape from their tragic situation except through an Act of Parliament, which should quiet titles and secure them in possession of their ancient chapels. It was this end that was sought through what is known as the Dissenters' Chapel Bill.⁴⁶

It was at once generally recognized that if the law were allowed to take its course a great wrong and shocking injustice would be suffered by a body of good citizens who had committed no crime, but had simply continued, unchallenged, to worship where their fathers before

⁴³ *v. supra*, Ms p 623

⁴⁴ Established in 1716 by Dr Daniel Williams, Presbyterian minister in London, and a leader among the Dissenters, to maintain a library and provide aid for divinity students and ministers

⁴⁵ Cf. Aspland, *Memor.* p 399.

⁴⁶ For full reports of the proceedings, cf *Parliamentary Debates on the Dissenters' Chapels Bill* (London, 1744); *Presbyterian Reporter*, 7 numbers, intercalated in *Christian Reformer*, xi, N. S., 1844, *passim*. For a very partisan account, cf. James, *History of Litigation*, pp. 497-581, 759-797.

them had worshiped; while if allowed to continue as they were, no injustice would be suffered by any one. To discover what could now be done, a small committee at once laid their situation before the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, and the Attorney-General, and applied for legislative relief. The Government was sympathetic, the Attorney-General promised to prevent any legal proceedings against them until their claim had been fully considered, and the judges who had decided the Hewley case against them were more than ready to cooperate in any measures to prevent them from suffering injustice in consequence of it. The committee was then enlarged so as to have authority from nearly every antitrinitarian congregation in England and Wales. At the next session of Parliament, in March, 1843, there was presented a full statement of the reasons for requesting parliamentary action.⁴⁷ Steps were taken with careful deliberation, and a Bill so drawn as to apply to Ireland as well, and heartily supported by all the judges that had sat in the Lady Hewley case, was introduced in the House of Lords March 7, 1844 by the Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst, who had himself pronounced judgment in the previous case. A great number of petitions supporting the Bill, or opposing it, were presented; and after considerable debate from the Government in support of the Bill, and from the Bishops of London and Exeter leading the opposition opposing it, it passed the necessary stages by handsome majorities and was sent to the House of Commons. From the start various circumstances strongly favored the passage of the Bill. Not only did the judges give it their unanimous support, but the leaders of both the Government and the opposition party were agreed upon it. In the House of Commons in 1837 four fifths of the Dissenting members were Unitarians. The Bishops however were generally, though not unanimously, in opposition, and from outside of Parliament a vast number of petitions opposing the Bill were filed by Independents, Methodists and Calvinistic Baptists, although there was a significant support given by churchmen and by minority members of the sects.⁴⁸

The debate in the Commons was long and spirited, and was marked by notable speeches from Macaulay, Gladstone, Lord John Russell and others besides the Government speaking in favor. Important amendments and improvements were adopted, and the Bill passed the Com-

⁴⁷ Cf. *Parliamentary Debates*, pp. 393-400.

⁴⁸ Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 422-470.

mons by a vote of 203 to 83. The amended Bill was then further discussed in the House of Lords, and passed July 15, 1844 by a vote of 202 to 41. Royal Assent was given four days later.⁴⁰ The Act as passed was based on the accepted principle that long undisputed possession of property creates a vested right; and it provided in the present case that the Unitarians should be secured in their possession of trusts containing no doctrinal provision, when they could prove undisputed usage of twenty-five years in favor of the opinions they held and taught. The decision was received with deep indignation by the orthodox bodies concerned, but by the public at large not directly concerned it was accepted as an act of simple justice, which established, to those that had for generations worshiped in them, the long uncontested title to their chapels, and thus put an end to otherwise endless litigation, and yet defrauded or injured no one. For the Unitarians themselves it gave welcome relief from a long period of anxious suspense, and opened the door to a period of renewed life and vigor.

⁴⁰ For the text of the Bill as finally passed, cf. *Parliamentary Debates*, pp. 405-407; James, *History of Litigation*, p. 797 f. The conservative vote was nearly equally divided; the liberal was 13 to 1. For the voters' names, cf. *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 413 ff.

CHAPTER XIX

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN ITS MATURE LIFE

THE PASSAGE OF the Dissenters' Chapels Act definitely marks the beginning of a new era in the history of the Unitarian movement in England. After the surge of new life and activity following the passage of the Trinity Act in 1813, the affairs of the churches had showed no little vigor. Old congregations renewed their strength, many new ones were gathered, and the whole new denomination pressed on toward the goal of complete religious freedom. Despite the growing unfriendliness of the orthodox, the small clouds on the horizon were ignored. But when the Wolverhampton and Lady Hewley cases arose after a decade or two, and were protracted year after year, dark clouds began to gather over the Unitarians as they contemplated the possible loss of all their old chapels and funds. This fear naturally dampened their spirits, slowed down their missionary activities, and kept them from building new chapels or even keeping their old ones in repair. In the twenty-five years of uncertainty and increasing discouragement, numbers of their congregations, especially small ones in the country which depended for their support on only two or three families, became all but extinct. Yet despite all, a hundred of these small country societies were still holding together at the middle of the century. Now with the passing of the Dissenters' Chapels Act, fears were dispelled and spirits revived, and as soon as congregations had time to take breath and recover tone, a marked increase of zeal and activity set in. Thus whereas during the first quarter-century of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association but thirteen chapels were built or restored, in the next quarter there were more than sixty, besides a considerable number of wholly new congregations gathered. Numerous local missionary societies were also now organized to cooperate with the national Association in the work of church extension.

The missionary spirit was particularly active in the growing manufacturing towns of Lancashire, and the local demand for popular

preachers to gather and sustain these new movements was so pronounced that a new school for training the needed ministers was called into being. It was thus that in 1854 the Unitarian Home Missionary Board (from 1889 known as the Unitarian Home Missionary College, and since 1926 as the Unitarian College, Manchester), was founded by the Rev. John R. Beard of Manchester. The demand for it was the more urgent since Manchester New College had just been removed to London. The definite aim of the new school was to make men without previous University training, whose life hitherto had been spent in trade or industry rather than in academic studies, men of the people, who understood and sympathized with the wants of their own class, and could present the gospel to them in their own homely language, and to prepare them for a popular ministry to the common people. It was believed that such men, suitably chosen, would find a large field in the rapidly growing and prosperous Lancashire towns, and could also supply the smaller Presbyterian and Unitarian congregations that had formerly been partly supported from the Lady Hewley Fund. This venture, at first an experiment, rapidly surpassed the expectations of its supporters, and proved an incalculable factor in the Unitarian movement.¹

The serious financial loss that Unitarian causes suffered by the decision of the Lady Hewley case in 1844 was to a considerable degree repaired three years later by the trust established by Robert Hibbert (1770-1849),² a retired merchant of London, who left to trustees a large sum, the income of which they were to apply at discretion 'to the spread of Christianity in its most simple and intelligible form.' The income has been used to subsidize a large number of advanced scholars, to endow the well-known Hibbert Lectures, and to support the *Hibbert Journal*. In 1856 yet another benefaction bore witness to the renewed vitality of the Unitarian cause. On the initiative and largely through the efforts of Christopher Rawdon of Liverpool (1780-1858)³ a Minis-

¹ Cf. Herbert McLachlan, *The Unitarian Home Missionary College* (London, 1915). With changing conditions, the definitely limited purpose at first in mind was gradually outgrown and enlarged, and the requirements and facilities extended; and in 1904 the Unitarian College was affiliated to the free faculty of Theology in the University of Manchester.

² Cf. Spears, *Unitarian Worthies*, p. 297 f; *The Book of the Hibbert Trust* (London, 1933); *Christian Reformer*, N. S. ix (1853), 246-249.

³ Cf. 'Some Notices of the Late Christopher Rawdon,' *Christian Reformer*, N. S. xiv (1858), 737-746.

ters' Stipend Augmentation Fund of £20,000 (later augmented to £52,000) was constituted to replace the lost Hewley Fund, and to supplement the too often inadequate salaries of the ministers. Yet another witness to the effect of the Dissenters' Chapels Act was given in London, where the gratitude of Unitarians for the passage of the Act was testified by a permanent memorial, in the erection of the handsome University Hall, completed in Gordon Square in 1850, which was designed to serve as a Unitarian adjunct to University College.⁴

For a good many years the Committee of the national Association, in reply to appeals for aid for new congregations or enfeebled older ones, was forced to lament its narrow resources, and the failure of most of the churches to make any group contributions for the common work. An average of only some £1,400 a year made it possible, after providing for general objects, to make little grants of only five or ten pounds each to a small handful of needy causes. The amount of annual contributions was of course irregular, but for the first half-century the average amount did not greatly exceed that of the first decade, and it fell off notably during the years of the Hewley case. At length, however, bequests began to come in more frequently, a permanent fund was established (1857), and grants in aid of local churches, which had mostly been withheld during the years of uncertainty, were resumed, until by the end of the century over sixty causes were aided in a year; though the fact that most of the grants were still of only ten or twenty pounds suggests how close the aided congregations were to the subsistence level. The complaints of a dearth of ministers to supply the large number of vacant pulpits, and of the poor salaries deterring men from entering the ministry at all, and the Committee's published statement⁵ that 'a very large number of wealthy Unitarians gave nothing at all to the work of the Association, indicate that the common affairs of the denomination reached their lowest ebb in the anxious period of the Crimean War. But immediately after this came an encouraging revival, coincident with the removal of Manchester New College to London,

⁴ The original intention, to make University Hall an academic residence for Unitarian students at University College, with additional instruction and a Principal of its own, was not satisfactorily realized; and in 1853 it became the seat of Manchester New College now removed thither. In 1889, when the College again removed to Oxford, University Hall was purchased by Dr. Williams's Trustees, and it is now the home of Dr. Williams's Library.

⁵ Cf. *Thirty-second Annual Report*, 1857, p. 19.

and the establishing of its successor at Manchester; and the depleted ranks of the ministry were gradually filled, and the vacant pulpits were again supplied. The establishment in 1842 of the *Inquirer*, a weekly newspaper destined to have great value as a medium for all the churches, was another important step, and the output of Unitarian books and tracts went on steadily. Despite all discouraging conditions without and within, the Association continued to promote the cause as far as its limited means allowed. Special missionary enterprises were supported in Scotland where the dormant Scottish Unitarian Association was now reestablished, in the Potteries, in chosen districts in the North, the Eastern Counties, Kent, and the West of England, and for six years a special Missionary and Agent of the Association was in the field at large with excellent results. Thus a good number of new and handsome chapels were erected, and many others rebuilt, in the twenty years after the Dissenters' Chapels Act.

The pathetic little foreign mission at Madras was kept alive for a generation, and though no considerable results were achieved, small appropriations (even after the Association had voted to be no longer responsible for the work) were continued until the end of the century. Warm friendly relations were also cultivated with the Unitarians in Transylvania, and at the time of their great crisis in 1857,⁶ their churches were saved from ruin by the timely help given from England. *The Brevis Expositio* of 1821⁷ had discovered a wide circle of sympathizers throughout Europe, and frequent assurances of religious sympathy were exchanged with liberal spirits in France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Italy,⁸ and even in the West Indies and Brazil. Under the glow of enthusiasm that these responses kindled one was almost persuaded to believe that the whole world was ready to burst out into Unitarianism if some providential leader were to kindle the torch. In the middle years of the century permanent churches were established in such important colonial centres as Montreal and Toronto in Canada, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide in Australia, Hobart in Tasmania, and Cape Town in South Africa. On the whole, in spite of all hindrances and dis-

⁶ *Vide supra*, pp. 153-155.

⁷ *Vide supra*, p. 149.

⁸ Thus with Athanase Coquerel and his followers in Paris, the *Protestanten Verein* in Germany, the *Protestantenbond* in Holland and Professor Ferdinando Bracciforte in Milan.

couragements, of organization that was loosely knit and hence unable to act efficiently, of small means, of an unyielding attachment to congregational independence and a corresponding aversion to confederate action, which led a very important proportion of the societies and individuals best able to promote the common cause to hold aloof from taking active part in supporting it, still it can be recorded that during the first half century of the Association a gratifying deal of solid achievement was accomplished. The period of any considerable controversy with other bodies was past. The Unitarians had won nearly all the civil rights for which they had so long struggled;⁹ and they had come to hold an acknowledged place among the religious forces of the land, and were free to serve their time in their own way.

While the external progress of the Unitarian churches was going on as related above, important internal changes were quietly taking place, which were of the greatest significance. It will be remembered that the religion of those that first promoted the Unitarian cause in England was unhesitatingly biblical in its beliefs. Priestley and some of his immediate followers may have been in their own way materialists and determinists in their philosophy, but for the doctrines of their theology they depended solely upon the word of the Bible. Principal Wellbeloved of Manchester College, York, in his controversy with Wrangham in 1823, expressed the common view of Unitarians when he wrote, 'Convince us that any tenet is authorized by the Bible, from that moment we receive it, . . . and no power on earth shall wrest it from us.' If they nevertheless rejected some things found in the Bible, it was because the passages concerned had been proved to be late additions or corruptions of the text, and hence no true part of authentic Scripture. They contended that the Unitarian doctrinal system was more in accord with the Bible than the orthodox one. But by the time when the Unitarian Association was founded, the new German biblical criticism was beginning to weaken the foundations, and it was coming to be felt by some that their faith needed a more solid basis than had hitherto sufficed. The day was about to dawn when Priestley and Belsham were no longer to be listened to as the major prophets of Unitarianism, and when the prevailing current of its thought was to be that of James

⁹ In 1871 came the final victory, when the University Tests Abolition Bill was passed, opening all degrees, emoluments and offices to Nonconformists.

Martineau and John James Tayler.¹⁰ Early in his ministry at Liverpool a transition in Martineau's thinking had begun. He had undertaken in 1835 to explore the true foundations of religious belief in six sermons, which were later published as a little book.¹¹ In this he criticized both the Catholic view that the decisions of the Church must be accepted as final authority in matters of religion, and the Protestant reliance on Scripture as final authority; and he contended "that reason is the ultimate appeal, the supreme tribunal, to the test of which even Scripture must be brought."¹² He thus became herald of a view that, though not generally taken for granted until a half-century later, has at length become accepted as one of the principles fundamentally characterizing the Unitarian movement.

It is at this time that symptoms are first shown of a rift among the Unitarians, which never came quite to an open breach, indeed, but which for a time threatened a distinct cleavage between two different elements in the denomination, the one rather aggressively denominational, and emphasizing adherence to the traditional beliefs of Unitarians and to the Unitarian name, and the other, laying little stress upon particular doctrines, but holding a spirit of generous breadth as to doctrines, provided a sincere religion of the heart were present. Let them here for convenience be called the conservative and the liberal wings. Both wings traced their descent from a common stock in the old Dissent; but the contrasted tendencies began to be evident even in the first two organized societies, the *Unitarian Book Society* and the *Unitarian Fund*. At the risk of drawing distinctions too sharply it may

¹⁰ James Martineau (1805-1900), born at Norwich, was destined to be an engineer, but feeling dissatisfied with this he chose the ministry, for which he prepared under Wellbeloved at Manchester College, York. After first serving a Unitarian church in Eustace Street, Dublin for four years he became minister of a congregation in Paradise Street, Liverpool, which he served until 1857. As Professor in Manchester New College he also served from 1840 to 1885.

John James Tayler (1797-1869) born in London, son of a minister. He was educated at Manchester College, York, and at Glasgow University, and was minister of a congregation in Moseley Street (later in Brook Street), Manchester, 1821-1853. Principal of Manchester New College, London, 1853-1869. His most important published work was his *Retrospect of the Religious Life of England*, 1845.

¹¹ *The Rationale of Religious Inquiry or, the question stated of Reason, the Bible, and the Church* (London, 1836).

¹² *Op cit*, p. 119. This view had indeed been distinctly set forth long before by the Socinian Wiszowaty in his little work on *Rational Religion*, published in Holland in 1685 (*vide supra*, vol. 1, 572), but it was little known, and by now had been completely forgotten, and can hardly have been known to Martineau.

in general be said that what we have named the liberal wing was largely made up of old Dissenting families, county landholders, and men engaged in business or commerce, predominating in London and the larger provincial towns, persons of moderate or large wealth and good education, inheriting the traditions of the old Presbyterianism; that their ministers were scholarly men of ample learning, who preached able sermons appealing more to the intellect than to the feelings, but were little given to dogmatism, and depended less upon missionary preaching than upon the printing-press to defend or spread their views through books and tracts. Their ministers were largely trained at Manchester (New) College, and their chief leaders were James Martineau, John James Tayler, John Hamilton Thom, and Charles Beard, who powerfully influenced religious thought by their articles in their periodicals, the *Christian Teacher*, *Prospective Review*, *National Review*, and *Theological Review*. The conservative wing, on the other hand, besides including not only a great many of the democratic middle class, had also a significant contingent of artisans and others of the humbler class, on the whole more from factory towns and country districts than from the larger centres of wealth and culture. To this wing those from the old General Baptist societies, and from the off-shoots of Methodism, naturally gravitated. They were in the main persons enjoying but a moderate standard of wealth and education; while their ministers were men who knew how to appeal to the common people in familiar address, were interested in promoting church extension by missionary enterprises, and were inclined to be active in matters of social and political reform. Their religious beliefs were strictly based on the Bible, and they set much store by the distinctive doctrines of Unitarianism. Thus they enthusiastically supported the missionary work of the Unitarian Fund as a necessary supplement to the modest work of the Book Society. For their ministers they looked first to Aspland's short-lived Unitarian Academy at Hackney as well as to tested lay-preachers, and later to the Home Missionary Board at Manchester. Their spirit was best embodied in Richard Aspland of Hackney and his son Robert Brooke, and it found expression during nearly fifty years in the successive series of the *Christian Reformer*; while in later years the weekly newspapers the *Unitarian Herald* and the *Christian Life* spoke for them as the *Inquirer* did for the liberals.

There is evidence that Martineau as a brilliant young minister at

Liverpool had already been regarded by conservatives with suspicion as to the soundness of his faith; and when his *Rationale* was published in 1836, with its declaration that in matters of religion the supreme authority is reason, to which even the word of Scripture must be submitted, it was clear to the guardians of the old faith that here was a dangerous heretic, who would be undermining the very foundations of their religion. By 1838 there was such general discontent with the state of affairs in the denomination, with its slow progress and prevailing lethargy, that the Association's Committee issued an appeal to all ministers and active lay-members throughout the denomination to attend an "aggregate meeting of Unitarians" to be held in London. It was so held during two days in June, and was largely attended.¹³ The general situation was discussed earnestly and at length, and the need of some effective plan for better cooperation was recognized. Many weak points were noted, and many reforms proposed. But beyond the clarification of confused issues that free discussion may bring about, the most significant result of the meeting was a dim recognition of the fact that the traditional foundations of Unitarianism were slowly giving way, that the supreme authority of Scripture was being dissolved, that a faith depending wholly on it did not satisfy the deepest needs of the soul, and that the Unitarianism of the past, founded on events of ancient history and relying only upon external authority, must now give way to one grounded on inner conviction in the soul of man. The religion to come must be no mere ism, adopted by the understanding and in time liable to be outgrown, but must be a permanent possession of the soul within.

Such views as these were more or less echoed by a number of the speakers, but they were expressed most strongly by Martineau and John James Tayler, who were not only Professors in the College at Manchester, but also ministers at Manchester and Liverpool. From now on Martineau's utterances were narrowly watched, and three years later when the Liverpool controversy took place, in which he spoke out more plainly than ever, the conservative organ, the *Christian Reformer*, treated it with silence, publishing nothing about it after the opening announcement. These suggestions of a reconstruction of the bases of religious faith were of course not widely accepted and adopted at the

¹³ Cf. full report in *Christian Reformer*, N. S. xv (1838), 853-873, 629-661; also separately (London, 1828).

first hearing, but they gradually sank into the minds of not a few, and a generation or more later bore ample fruit. Meanwhile Martineau went his way. With the following years his convictions were confirmed. In them he was much influenced by the writings of Channing in America, who had expressed warm approval of his recent writings, while he not long afterwards found a kindred spirit in the radical writings of Theodore Parker. His sermons sounded ever deeper levels, and depended less and less on merely biblical thought. Although unequivocally Unitarian in his own doctrinal belief, he was no sectarian, but constantly emphasized the essential Christian faith above any particular doctrine. The greater breadth and depth of his sympathies was shown in his compilation of a new hymnbook,¹⁴ which drew from a very wide range of Christian devotion, but also discarded a great many of the hitherto popular hymns based on a purely biblical background. The book was widely adopted, and did not a little in the course of a generation to mold the thought and feeling of worshipers. Along with unremitting attention to his congregation, he took on in 1840 the additional duty of lecturing to the students at Manchester New College, which he continued throughout his active life, and a few years later (1845) he also became one of the editors of the *Prospective Review*, to which he contributed brilliant essays that brought his views before a wider public.

In 1848 Martineau went abroad for a year's refreshment and study, chiefly in Germany, in which he gave especial attention to New Testament criticism and philosophy. Even before this he had bidden a final farewell to the philosophical views of Hartley and Priestley, and was now more strongly than ever confirmed in a theology based on the intuitions of the soul within rather than on a miraculous revelation from without. In his New Testament studies he also presently became an avowed adherent of the radical criticism of Baur and other scholars of the Tübingen School, abandoned belief in miracles, or at least in their importance, and adopted the view that Jesus instead of being the divinely appointed Messiah was a strictly human being. Of course a storm of criticism burst upon him from the conservative wing; and for a time he felt so much estranged that he even was tempted to consider whether he should seek a more congenial religious home in

¹⁴ *Hymns for the Christian Church and Home* (London, 1849), compare also his later *Hymns of Praise and Prayer* (London, 1876)

America. But as long as Manchester New College continued at Manchester, Martineau continued teaching in it; and even after it removed to London in 1853 he went up once a fortnight for four years to deliver two weeks' lectures on two successive days. In 1857 the resignation of the Principal called for a reorganization of the teaching, and the Committee appointed Martineau to the vacant chair. Strong opposition, however, arose among conservative supporters of the College, who objected to Martineau as an innovator and an unsound mystical teacher. Dissentients on the Committee together with other ministers and laymen, sixty-five in all, published a formal protest against the appointment; whereupon Martineau refused to accept the appointment without a decisive vote of confidence from the whole Board. A special meeting was held, an overwhelming vote of confidence was cast, and he entered upon his duties without further molestation. Thus ended a conflict which was the nearest approach ever made to a doctrinal split in the denomination. On the surface the question at issue had appeared to be about a difference of doctrinal views; but at bottom it was a question of fundamental principle, whether any test of theological belief, expressed or implied, should limit the freedom of teachers.¹⁵

From this time on Martineau exercised increasing influence from his chair as a teacher during the 28 years until his retirement in 1885, having succeeded Tayler as Principal in 1869; and from having been suspected or feared as a dangerous heretic he came to be honored by all as perhaps the ablest living champion of spiritual religion in face of the attacks then being made by a new school of physical or natural science. In one respect Martineau had long felt, as did Tayler, the Principal of the College, that the denomination was organized on too narrow a basis. While unwavering in his personal adherence to Unitarian doctrines, he felt that stress had been laid more on temporary items of theology than on the deeper principle of freedom: the position of the Unitarians was thus too sectarian. He felt that common worship should be founded not on common theological beliefs but upon a common purpose to nourish Christian life. Some things that he had said at a public meeting in London in 1858 gave rise to an exchange of letters (later published) between him and the Rev. S. F. MacDonald

¹⁵ For a full account of the controversy, cf. Drummond and Upton, *Life of Martineau* (London, 1902), i, 296-325; *Christian Reformer*, N. S. xiii (1857), 189 f, 312-322, 379-388; also M. N. C., *Special Report and Protest*, bound in.

of Chester,¹⁶ which powerfully set forth his contention, and roused a storm of criticism. Though controversy was not prolonged, personal opinions kept quietly developing. On the one hand there was a desire for a wider and more generous fellowship, and on the other a demand for more definite teaching. At the annual meeting of the Association in 1866 an attempt was made to commit the churches to a definite support of the Unitarian doctrines as to God and Christ, but the motion was overwhelmingly rejected. In 1867, however, the custom of having congregations represented by delegates was abandoned, and thus the objection that congregations were bound by the action of the Association was annulled. The way was now open for forming a broad inclusive union among all liberal churches on a spiritual basis regardless of differences of doctrinal belief. As a sequel to this action, steps were a few days later taken toward forming a Free Christian Union, inviting the adherence of all Christians without regard to doctrine. Organization was completed later in the year, but though a few men of great distinction joined, and a large public meeting was held in 1869, no enthusiasm was generated, only a handful of scattered congregations sought fellowship, the denominational press was hostile, and the Union was dissolved at the end of 1870, to Martineau's lasting disappointment. He had felt very deeply on what was to him a matter of vital principle; and, convinced Unitarian though he was in belief, he would yet never consent to join, as member or minister, a church whose very name committed it to a specific doctrine. He had, however, one more opportunity to set forth his ideal when he was invited in 1888 to contribute a paper on it at a meeting of the Triennial Conference at Leeds. Here he presented and with masterly skill advocated an elaborate scheme of church organization of the Presbyterian type, designed to embrace all the 300 or more liberal congregations of various names in Great Britain and Ireland, to be included under the non-doctrinal name of Presbyterian. He was respectfully listened to; but after two years' consideration his proposal was rejected.¹⁷

After this trying period of internal tension, the affairs of the de-

¹⁶ Cf. Carpenter, *James Martineau* (London, 1905), chap. xiii; and, in detail, *Inquirer*, xviii (1859), 763 f; *Christian Reformer*, N. S., xiv (1858), 378, 719-728; xv (1859), 603-620, 747 f, 752-754; Martineau, 'The Unitarian Position,' and 'Church-Life? or Sect-Life?' in his *Essays*, ii, 371-420.

¹⁷ Cf. Drummond and Upton, *Life of Martineau*, ii, 134-146; Carpenter, *James Martineau*, pp. 517-521.

nomination went on smoothly, during the years of peace, unmarked by startling events. The weaker congregations were aided by modest grants, and when regular ministers could not be had their pulpits were often supplied by the faithful services of lay-preachers. Missionary efforts led to the establishment of causes in promising new centres, though for want of adequate funds no extensive operations could be undertaken. Many of the old congregations still showed a singular reluctance to join effectually in support of the common cause, and some thirty of the larger and wealthier ones made no contribution to the work of the Association. Nevertheless its income slowly increased, and the number of grants in aid grew; while the organization of local Associations in various parts of the kingdom much increased local interest in missionary efforts, and cooperated with the general Association in administering and supporting them. The institution in 1883 of an annual Association Sunday, on which all the congregations were asked to take up collections for the common cause, led to a healthy increase in public support; while in 1889 the bequest of Mr. William McQuaker of Glasgow left nearly £30,000 for the promotion of the cause in Scotland. Series of popular lectures on religious subjects were held in several large towns in 1883 and the following years, attracting large audiences; and the institution of an annual Essex Hall Lecture in 1893 brought before the public distinguished scholars in discussion of important themes of religion or allied subjects. The denomination had long suffered from the lack of adequate and convenient headquarters, and had been forced to occupy rented quarters that were cramped and outgrown. But in 1885 Lindsey's old Essex Street Chapel, which was now to be abandoned as its congregation removed to a place of worship newly built in Kensington, was acquired by a Trust formed for the purpose, and (at an expense of £25,000) was reconstructed so as to provide a central hall for Unitarian and other assemblies, offices for the *British and Foreign Unitarian Association* and the *Sunday-school Association*, and book-rooms for both Associations. It served thus as the focal point for all Unitarian causes for 59 years until July, 1944, when the premises were destroyed by enemy action, and its occupants found temporary accommodations at University Hall in Gordon Square. In 1882, upon the initiative of the national Association, an important action was taken in the organizing of the *National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian and other Non-*

subscribing or Kindred Congregations, which was intended primarily as a deliberative body, but also did invaluable service in forwarding various projects and in promoting cooperation in supporting them.¹⁸ The Conference held triennial meetings. Working in harmony with the Association it inspired various new activities until at length it became increasingly clear that it would be a great economy of effort and a great gain in efficiency if the Association and the Conference were amalgamated into one. Hence after ample deliberation it was voted by both societies in 1926 to merge into a *General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches*, on a representative basis. The merger was accomplished with great heartiness and enthusiasm; and its work has been supplemented by intensive effort among the women by the *British League of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women* (founded 1908), and among men by the *Unitarian and Free Christian Men's League* (founded 1920).

While these important developments were taking place in the home field during the last third of the century, the progress of liberal Christianity in other lands was followed with eager interest and active sympathy. The state of the Unitarian Church in Transylvania was watched with fraternal interest, and each year one selected student from there was provided for at Manchester College (and from 1911 on another was elected to study at the Unitarian College, Manchester), to return home and be influential leaders in schools or colleges there, while generous aid was given toward establishing a new church at the Hungarian capital in Budapest. Communications were maintained with the *Protestanten Verein* in which the liberals in Germany were sustaining a new movement against strong orthodox opposition, and with the similar *Protestantenbond* in the Netherlands, and delegates were often sent to their annual gatherings or received from them. Similar relations were had with the liberals of the Reformed Church in France, where the Coquerels, father and son, were suffering persecution or exclusion; and with the progressive wing of the Reformed Church in Switzerland, which had left Calvin far behind; and with a rising Free Christian Church at Brussels under the Rev. J. Hocart, and a lone champion of Unitarianism at Milan, where Professor Ferdinando Bracciforti for many years led a little band of Unitarians and pub-

¹⁸ Such as the Ministers' Stipend Augmentation Fund, the Sustentation Fund, the Ministers' Pension Fund, etc.

lished a paper for them. Correspondence was also cultivated with scattered leaders of progressive religion in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland, and encouragement was given to their efforts to promote a more liberal Christianity; and beginning with 1888 some part was taken in cooperation with a new mission that the American Unitarian Association had undertaken with much promise in Japan. Relations with the American Association grew steadily more intimate and cordial, and reciprocal exchanges of delegates at annual meetings became frequent, while the home churches fostered as intimate relations as possible with the younger generation of churches in distant Colonies. Thus we have followed the development of the Unitarian movement in England from its scattered beginnings, through devious channels and manifold persecutions and oppressions, down to a time at the end of the nineteenth century where it embraces the civilized world in its extent, and is matured in its organization. It is not the design here to follow up the history to its latest phases, still less to try to forecast its future. In the twentieth century it has continued to pursue its broad mission, has along with the rest of the religious world been bound to meet the searching test of the two most exhausting wars in history, and though sorely shaken has yet survived both with steadfast fidelity. It is still undergowing the slow changes in thought and spirit that are involved in normal life and growth, but while these are in progress they do not yet belong to history.

It remains now only to make a brief summary of the progress achieved in this section of our history toward fully realizing the principles that we took at the outset to be most characteristic of the movement; and then to note how far the movement in England has justified itself by its contributions to human betterment through the institutions of society. English Unitarianism did not have to wage a long struggle in order to realize freedom from ancient creeds or modern confessions. Indeed from the first rise of the movement, it looked for its knowledge of religious truth only to the Scriptures, whose meaning each Protestant claimed liberty to determine for himself. Moreover, these in themselves offered so broad a charter of freedom from the creeds that had been forsaken, that it was long before it was realized that they too set some limits to entire freedom of religious thought. But beginning with Priestley's handling of the text, and continuing with the influence of German criticism, the leaders of Unitarian thought gradually came well

before the end of the nineteenth century to realize that the Bible was to be read and interpreted like any other book. The consequence of this judgment was the recognition that the ultimate foundations of religion are within the human soul, and hence that the highest court to which any question in religion may resort is found in the reason and conscience of man.

The last step to take, and the hardest one to achieve in religious progress, is that of tolerance. In the stress of feeling toward the middle of the nineteenth century, when the conservative majority were still relying on the supernatural elements in the Gospels as furnishing the ultimate proofs of the truth of the Christian religion, while the leading spirits in the progressive wing were ceasing to attach any importance to these, religious tolerance was certainly put to a severe test; but as there was no accepted method by which a free church could expel members for a matter of doctrinal opinion, nothing could be done beyond an appeal to reason. Patience was reluctantly preserved, and self-restraint was exercised, time wrought its own cure, and tolerance remained intact.

The final judgment upon the work and worth of a religious movement must be based on its influence upon individual lives and its effect upon the institutions of men in society. In this respect the English Unitarian churches have left a worthy mark upon personal characters and public institutions. Their constituency has on the whole been composed of an active, energetic element of the population, alive to public causes and heartily interested in social welfare. They were urgent for parliamentary reform, were almost or quite unanimously Whigs in politics, and foremost in the long up-hill struggle for full legal and social rights for not only Protestant Dissenters, but Catholics and Jews as well. In the movement for the Dissenters' Chapel Law they had thirteen members in Parliament when the other Dissenting bodies had none; indeed, it was noted that they were long the most over-represented body of any in Parliament. They were deeply involved in the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, foremost in movements for improving the condition of the poor, for promoting public health, popular education, university education, charity organization, prison reform, and numberless other projects local or national. To attempt even to mention the names of all Unitarians that have become prominent through their activity in worthy public causes, as well as in government, education,

science and literature, would be to transform pages of history into a mere catalogue list.¹⁹ It would be far within the truth instead to say simply that in all these matters they have taken a part quite out of proportion to their relatively small numbers, and to no small degree have done this as a normal expression of a spirit that has been rooted in their religion, and stimulated by its ministers.

¹⁹ For a detailed study of the record, cf. McLachlan, *Unitarian Movement* and Raymond V. Holt, *The Unitarian Contribution to Social Progress in England* (London, 1938). See also *National Conference of Churches, Report of Tenth Meeting* (New York, 1882).

CHAPTER XX

RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES IN COLONIAL NEW ENGLAND

HAVING IN THE PREVIOUS DIVISIONS of this work treated of the rise and development of the Unitarian movement or its equivalent in Socinianism, in its two parent countries of Poland and Transylvania, and of its sequel in England, we are now to trace the history of its latest phase in the New World. Nothing would be more natural at first thought than to expect that here we should find American Unitarianism merely a transplantation into a fresh field of a religion already fully developed and organized in other countries, much as Socinianism in Holland was only a continuation of teachings and customs that religious exiles had brought with them from Poland. Such an expectation, however, would not be confirmed by the facts; for there is no evidence that the Socinianism of the Continent had more than the slightest influence, if any, on the development of Unitarianism in America, or that Socinian books were known or read in New England by any one at the time when Unitarianism was first taking shape there.¹ Still less can Unitarianism in Massachusetts be accounted for as something brought over from England by the colonists that settled New England in the seventeenth century, for at that period the Unitarian movement had not yet arisen in England. Nor even when the Unitarian movement was becoming coherent here were there more than

¹ It is indeed recorded that about 1738 two Polish Socinians, sons of the famous Socinian scholar, Samuel Crellius, were members of a company of emigrants from England to the new colony of Georgia; but no record has been discovered of their life or influence there, except that one of them was a justice of the peace, and that the other was engaged in Agriculture, and that though married neither of them left any male heir. Cf. Bock, *Historia Antitrinitariorum*, 1, 168 f; also vol 1, 577 of the present work. The only instance of possible Socinian influence is found at Oldenbarnevelt (later Barnevelt) in central New York, where the learned Dr. Francis A. van der Kemp, a Mennonite preacher from Leiden, who had perhaps been subject to Socinian influence in Holland, and who had landed at New York as a political exile in 1788, joined with a banished patriot soldier who was agent of the Holland Land Company, in organizing in 1803 a United Protestant Religious Society, whose charter pledged it to absolute freedom of belief. Two years later this society settled an avowed Unitarian minister, and thenceforth stedfastly adhered to the Unitarian movement. *v. infra*, p. 412 n.

two or three places (besides perhaps three instances of abortive movements)² in which there was any direct influence exercised by leaders of the Unitarian movement that at the end of the eighteenth century was slowly groping towards organized form in England. For the leaders of the nascent Unitarian church there were advocating views of Christ that made the very name Unitarian repugnant to most of the liberal Congregationalists in America.

Our movement, then, in the main sprang independently from native roots in the soil of New England Congregationalism, which in its turn had arisen from a fusion of the Pilgrim Colony of Plymouth and the Puritan Colonies of Salem and Massachusetts Bay, whose religion was a strict form of the Calvinism that their fathers had adopted in England. This was so far taken for granted that for a long time no assent to anything like a creed was required for admission to membership in the church. Instead, the Covenants which were accepted as their bond of union were simply voluntary mutual agreements with God's help to lead a Christian life.³ It is true that the candidate was sometimes requested to give an account of his personal religious experience, and that occasionally there was a confession of faith, though this was considered quite unnecessary; but it was well over a century before assent to a formal creed became the accepted tradition of the orthodox churches. There was of course a body of doctrine generally accepted among the colonial churches, and creeds or confessions of faith were sometimes adopted (as by the 'Reforming Synod' in 1680) as a sort of recognized standard, though they were not imposed as binding the churches. There were indeed laws to restrain 'heresy,' passed in 1646 and 1697, which remained on the books until 1780; but these were aimed not at spreaders of false doctrine, but at Catholics and Episco-

² The exceptions are King's Chapel at Boston, Philadelphia, and perhaps one of the Salem churches, besides short-lived movements at Portland, Saco, and Hallowell, Maine.

³ Two examples of early New England Covenants may serve as illustrations. That of the church at Salem (the first Congregational church in America, 1629) reads: "We covenant with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in all his ways, according as he is pleased to reveal himself unto us in his blessed word of truth." That of the First Church in Boston (1630) reads: "We do hereby solemnly and religiously promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rule of the Gospel, . . . and in mutual love and respect each to other, so near as God shall give us grace." These two Covenants bind one to no statement of belief, have survived the theological changes of over three centuries, and are still in use. Cf. Daniel Appleton White, *New England Congregationalism*, etc. (Salem, 1861), pp. 113, 250.

paians, Baptists and Quakers, regarded as persons dangerous to public order or to peace in the community

This use of undogmatic Covenants instead of Creeds in the admission of members to churches was of course not designed to encourage easy changes of belief, for orthodoxy was assumed without question, yet it undesignedly left the door wide open. For in a community where religion was a topic of all absorbing interest, though most would accept a traditional system of belief without question, the more active minds, while perhaps not inclined to publish their doubts, would tend to regard some points as debatable. Hence within a generation or two the Calvinistic system had in a good many minds insensibly begun to dissolve, and in (Edward Johnson's) *Wonder Working Providence* (1654) there is already an early complaint of Arminians and Arians in the Colony.⁴

The Liberal movement whose origins we are now tracing was not at first concerned with the doctrine of the Trinity nor that of the Deity of Christ, though its progress is to be seen in efforts to soften down some of the articles so as to make them more agreeable to reason and Scripture. The first clear word to be spoken in this direction was by William Pynchon, gent, a wealthy Puritan of high standing who had come to New England in 1630 as one of the officers of the Massachusetts Company.⁵ In 1636 he removed to the Connecticut River and became founder of a new Colony later known as Springfield, of which he was Magistrate until 1651. In 1650 he published a small volume that produced great excitement at Boston,⁶ where the General Court at its next session solemnly protested against its many errors and heresies, and condemned it to be burned by the common hangman in the marketplace at Boston. The author, long a highly honored gentleman, now sixty years old, was ordered to appear before the General Court and answer for his book. It is not to the purpose to review the book here, beyond saying that while moderately Calvinistic it presented a view of the Atonement differing from the dominant orthodoxy of the day. The General Court, however, requested the Rev. John Norton of Ipswich,

⁴ Cited by Worcester, *Rev Samuel Worcester*, 1, 38 n.

⁵ Cf. Ezra Hoyt Byington, *The Puritan in England and New England* (Boston, 1897), chapter 1v.

⁶ *The Meritorious Price of Our Redemption* (London, 1650), 158 pp. A complete reprint may be found in Henry M. Burt's *First Century of the History of Springfield* (Springfield, 1899).

reputed for his scholarship, to prepare a reply to Pyncheon's book.⁷ Pyncheon presented to the Court a mollifying statement, which caused it somewhat to relax its attitude, and the case was allowed to drop. In the course of the year Pyncheon returned to England, where in 1655 he published a rejoinder to Norton, with the original title expanded, and a text of three times the original length. He found sympathizers among the liberal Dissenters in England.

For well-nigh a generation after Pyncheon's case there was no particular doctrinal disturbance in the Massachusetts churches. By the Cambridge Platform in 1648 their organization had been definitely settled, and the congregational polity established against threatened aggression of Presbyterianism; but the doctrine set forth in the Westminster and Savoy Confessions was not ratified until the "Reformed Synod" in 1680. However, pressure for broader civil liberty and more religious freedom had been silently growing; and when in 1684 the English Court of Chancery declared the charter of the Colony vacated, and when a new government directly subject to the Crown was chartered in 1691, the Puritan régime with its restricted liberties was at an end. Meanwhile the writings of the more liberal thinkers in England were freely circulated and read in Massachusetts, and were quietly influencing colonial thought—the rational and broad-minded Chillingworth, Locke, Milton, Baxter, Jeremy Taylor, Hutcheson, Tillotson; and the figures in the Trinitarian Controversy in the Church, Sherlock and South, Whiston and Clarke, all these mellowed the hard soil of the old Calvinism. The persecution of Emlyn at Dublin in 1703 was also noted, and called forth wide sympathy in Massachusetts; and echoes of the Arian controversy at Exeter, and of the doings at Salters' Hall in 1719 were eagerly followed. As Arianism spread in England correspondence grew up between Arian preachers and writers there and some of the more independent spirits in Massachusetts.

Despite the earnest efforts of the ministers, therefore, the first intensity of religious faith could not be maintained. Leading ministers began to be alarmed, as appears from the annual Convention sermons.⁸

⁷ *A Discussion of that Great Point in Divinity, the Sufferings of Christ*, etc. (London, 1653).

⁸ The General Convention of Congregational Ministers (including all ordained Congregational ministers in active service) used to gather at Boston at the time of the meeting of the General Court in May and to dine together, and in 1720 it was voted that a sermon should be preached on the day of the election. These sermons were *concionēs ad*

In his sermon of 1722 Cotton Mather sounded the alarm, lamenting that the ministers were neglecting to preach Christ; and the sermon of two years later echoed the complaint. But at just the time when the churches seemed to be growing ever more lax and indifferent to religion, there occurred a remarkable revival, known as the Great Awakening.⁹ It began at the end of 1734 at Northampton, where the whole community had been deeply stirred by the powerful and passionately earnest preaching of the minister, the Rev. Jonathan Edwards. The revival rapidly spread throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut, and excited great interest even in England. A little later it was carried to its greatest height by the Rev. George Whitefield from England, a revival preacher of phenomenal power, who had some years before come to America to assist John Wesley in his labors in Georgia. After preaching for some time in the southern and middle Colonies, he was in 1740 invited by the Rev. Benjamin Colman of the Brattle Square Church, Boston, to visit New England. In that year, and also in three subsequent visits, he preached in many towns to tremendous crowds and with great effect; and his efforts were followed by others' during several years of intense and widespread religious excitement, marked withal by extreme emotionalism, wild fanaticism and narrow bigotry, until at length the fever burned itself out and the general religious interest subsided almost as suddenly as it had arisen. While the Great Awakening had the effect of arousing or deepening interest in true religion in many communities, yet on the other hand its emotional excesses, its fanatical spirit, and its reactionary dogmatism had the opposite effect of alienating sober Christians, and among these not a few of the ablest and most honored ministers, who did not hesitate to raise their voices in behalf of a religion marked by sobriety and reasonableness.¹⁰

clerum. The first was by Increase Mather. They often furnish a good clue to the progress of thought. See the *Historical Sermon* by the Rev. John W. Harding, with a list of preachers (Boston, 1887); continued by the Rev. Christopher R. Eliot, *U. H. S.* (Boston), viii, 7-26, 1947.

⁹ Cf. Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening*, (Boston, 1842).

¹⁰ For a well documented survey of the Unitarian controversy from its beginnings down to 1833, see E. H. Gillett, 'History and Literature of the Unitarian Controversy,' *Historical Magazine*, N. S. ix (1871), 222-324; and for a general account of the early development of Unitarianism, from an orthodox standpoint, see a series of 'Letters on the Introduction and Progress of Unitarianism in New England' in *Spirit of the Pilgrims* (Boston), vols. ii-iv (1829-31); and (Bishop George Burgess), *Pages from the Ecclesiastical History of New England, 1740-1840* (Boston, 1847), reprinted from the *Episcopal Observer*.

The real significance of the Great Awakening for the history of the Unitarian movement, however, is in its effect on the development of doctrine. The effort of the conservatives to revive Calvinism led to a cleavage among the ministers. On his first visit Whitefield spoke of the New England clergy as 'dumb dogs, half devils and half beasts, spiritually blind, and leading people to hell,' complained of the low state of religion at Harvard, and made a similar criticism of the clergy at Yale. He was especially disliked by the educated and refined, and his statements were so much resented that on his later visits he was not invited to preach at the colleges, and many pulpits were closed against him.¹¹ From this time liberal tendencies were increasingly shown, and any inclination to soften the offensive features of Calvinism was blamed as heresy, and charges of being Arminian, Arian or Socinian were indiscriminately flung by the conservatives at all departing from the old doctrine. Even before 1750 over thirty ministers are said to have more or less departed from Calvinism, following the lead of Tillotson, Clarke, and other English liberals who were being more and more read, and sermons of the time in defence of the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ and other doctrines of Calvinism betray a sense that these were in danger. The cleavage above referred to is more marked in the writings of the conservative ministers, who made themselves guardians of the true faith during the second half of the century, than in those of the progressives, who went their own liberal way, and continued to read liberal English books, and to correspond with the authors, but were little inclined to engage in controversy. Jonathan Edwards saw such grave danger in Arminianism that he was moved to publish in 1754 his famous work on *Freedom of Will* to defend it against the attacks of Whitby; and in the last year of his life he was so deeply concerned by the mischievous effects of the English Arian John Taylor's *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*¹² that he felt bound to write one of his most powerful works to counteract it. In the same year (1758) we find his gifted disciple, Joseph Bellamy, defending the Trinity which Mayhew had attacked; and in 1768 Samuel Hopkins, Edwards's distinguished disciple, came all the way from Great Barrington to preach at Boston a sermon in which he told them to their face that a number of the Boston ministers much neglected, if they did not disbelieve, the doc-

¹¹ Cf. Josiah Quincy, *History of Harvard University* (Boston, 1860), ii, chapter xxii.

¹² *v. supra*, p. 267 and note.

trine of the Deity of Christ.¹³ The liberal ministers did not engage in controversy, yet doctrinal changes proceeded; and the Boston Association of Ministers, which had refused to recognize Mayhew, received into fellowship his successor, Simeon Howard,¹⁴ who from the first was regarded as unsound as to the Trinity.

The doctrinal change silently going on in spite of this conservative resistance was at first felt only as a vague undefined atmosphere, and it can best be treated only as it appears in the persons of outstanding representative individuals. By a gradual, almost unconscious, process in their thinking, they first ceased to emphasize certain doctrines as of vital importance, then left them out of account, and finally deliberately abandoned them from conviction, making no secret of their views. We take four of these progressive thinkers as examples of many. First to be mentioned is the Rev. Ebenezer Gay (1696-1787).¹⁵ After graduating from Harvard he became minister of the church at Hingham, where he had an unparalleled pastorate of nearly sixty-nine years. He had from the start the repute of being a fine scholar, and while yet a young man was esteemed one of the most learned among the ministers of New England. He was regarded as one of the ablest and most popular preachers of his period. One looks in vain in his sermons for any betrayal of his doctrinal position, for on principle he abstained from bringing controversial subjects into his preaching; though he was known to be liberal in his thinking, and as early as 1740 he took a decided stand with regard to the Trinity. Hence he has often been called the Father of American Unitarianism. Like all the ministers with whom he was most intimate, he was out of sympathy with the emotionalism, the fanatical spirit and the narrow dogmatism that marked the Great Awakening. His active service covers almost the whole period of the transition from the strict Calvinism of the first settlers to the emancipated Christianity of the last decade of the century, yet it is impossible to say just when the Hingham church crossed the dividing line. When he died his congregation had for two generations heard from his pulpit

¹³ Cf. Williston Walker, *History of the Congregational Churches* (New York, 1893), p. 278.

¹⁴ *v. infra*, pp. 387-389.

¹⁵ Cf. Frederick Lewis Weis, 'The Reverend Ebenezer Gay, D.D.,' *Proceedings of the Unitarian Historical Society* (Boston, 1916), i, 1-23; Samuel A. Eliot, *Heralds of a Liberal Faith* (Boston, 1912), i, 1-19; William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Unitarian Pulpit* (New York, 1865), pp. 1-19.

none of the doctrines of the old Calvinism, and they had long since abandoned these without being aware when or how, as was also the case with most of the congregations which silently became liberal without controversy or division. He was honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1785.

Near neighbor of Gay, and his contemporary during the middle of his long ministry, was the Rev. Lemuel Briant, minister of the North Precinct church in Braintree, which he served 1745-53. In 1749 he published a sermon (already preached in several of the churches) on 'The Absurdity and Blasphemy of Depreciating Moral Virtue.' Its liberal views disturbed some of the members of his church, and provoked answers from several of the neighboring ministers, with whom a controversy ensued that lasted a number of years. Though the body of his church agreed with him, a minority insisted on calling an Ecclesiastical Council to inquire into the soundness of his beliefs. Its competency was not acknowledged, and the majority of the church sustained their pastor. Although in the course of the controversy Briant had been called Arminian and Socinian, and John Adams sixty-five years later reckoned him as having been an early Unitarian, yet the questions of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ were not involved in the controversy. But as the greater part of the church decidedly took his side, and was ever afterwards aligned with the emerging liberal churches, it is perhaps fair to claim that this church was the earliest one clearly to take its stand on the liberal side. Briant was forced by ill health to resign in 1753, and died in the following year.²⁶

The minister of greatest influence in Boston during the second half of the eighteenth century was the Rev. Charles Chauncy (1705-87), minister of the First Church for sixty years.²⁷ Graduating from Harvard at sixteen he entered upon his sole pastorate at twenty-two. He was not noted for eloquence in the pulpit, but his preaching was marked by a gravity and deep earnestness which his hearers found most impressive. He was broad in his religious sympathies, and in the period before the Revolution he was a powerful advocate of liberty for the Colonies. His favorite authors were Archbishop Tillotson, Richard Baxter, and John Taylor. Though he did not indulge in sermons on disputed doctrines he exercised wide influence by his numerous published writings,

²⁶ Cf. William P. Lunt, *Two discourses* (Boston, 1840), pp. 50-53, 131-143.

²⁷ Cf. Sprague, *Unitarian Pulpit*, pp. 8-13; Eliot, *Heralds*, i, 20-34.

through which he became the best known of the liberal leaders of his time; and though his congregation was not disturbed by any doctrinal quarrel it steadily grew more liberal during his ministry. At the time of the Great Awakening he sternly opposed the prevailing religious excitement, and in 1743 he published an elaborate work entitled *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England*, which entirely disapproved of the revival and its spirit and methods. Near the end of his life he published a work defending the salvation of all men; and after his death, when the inevitable division of the churches occurred, his congregation found itself spontaneously on the liberal side. He was early honored with the Doctor's degree from the University of Edinburgh.

Yet more prominent and aggressive in the interest of liberal religion was the Rev. Jonathan Mayhew (1720-66), minister of the West Church, Boston. He was of the fifth generation of a distinguished family that for a hundred and sixty years had been missionaries to the Indians on Martha's Vineyard, was fitted for college by his father, and graduated with honor from Harvard at twenty-four. For the next three years he taught school, at the same time fitting himself for the ministry under the oversight of the Rev. Mr. Gay. He was at once called to the vacated pulpit of the West Church in Boston, which was but ten years old, but had already become suspected to be of doubtful orthodoxy. As he did not practice the customary reserve, but was outspoken in his opinions, it was well known that he did not believe in the Trinity; so that when it came to his ordination, the Boston ministers with one accord declined to assist in a Council, and they never invited him to join their Ministerial Association. Another and larger Council was then called, consisting of liberal ministers outside of Boston, and he was ordained by them (1747). The ordination sermon was preached by his close friend, Mr. Gay of Hingham. Mayhew soon won attention by the eloquence, boldness and freedom of his sermons. He was familiar with the writings of such English liberal writers as Milton, Locke, Clarke, Whiston, and Taylor of Norwich, and was by temperament a radical, who spoke his views without disguise or equivocation. In 1749, two years after his ordination, he published a volume of sermons in which he strongly urged the duty of free inquiry and of private judgment in matters of religion, and opposed the use of creeds, especially the Athanasian, as tests. The volume was soon reprinted in Eng-

land, and won him warm approval from prominent clergymen there. The result was that several of them (seconded by Governor Shirley) recommended him to the University of Aberdeen for the degree of Doctor of Divinity, which was conferred in 1749, when he was only thirty years of age.¹⁸

As Mayhew continued his correspondence with Arians and other liberals abroad, he grew bolder and more definite in his preaching, plainly preached the Unity of God by 1753, and in 1755 published it in a book of sermons.¹⁹ This gave the orthodox great offence, since it was the first time that one of the ministers had broken through their customary reticence and openly opposed the Trinitarian doctrine as unreasonable, unscriptural and self contradictory. Preachers and lecturers in generous numbers rose in defence of the doctrines under attack. The Overseers of Harvard College seriously discussed whether Mayhew's attack on the Trinity should not be answered on the part of the College, but concluded that it would be advisable that nothing be done. Writings in the papers kept criticism alive, until in 1756 appeared an American reprint of Thomas Emlyn's *Humble Inquiry*.²⁰ The editor ('G S, a Layman') refers to 'the little pieces lately printed amongst us upon the other side as being quite superficial and wholly unworthy of public notice'; and while dedicating the book to 'the Reverend the clergy of all Denominations in New England,' he commends it to their attention, and thinks it calculated to be of great service to the cause of Christianity in the country.²¹ This publication so much concerned Jonathan Edwards in his remote retirement among the Stockbridge Indians that he wrote Dr Edward Wigglesworth, Divinity Professor at Harvard, urging him to make an authoritative reply; and when the latter shrank from keeping the controversy alive, and advised that the matter be allowed to

¹⁸ Cf Alden Bradford *Memoir of the Life and Writings of Rev Jonathan Mayhew* (Boston 1838) p 32, 89-98, Sprague *Unitarian Pulpit* pp 22-29 Eliot *Heralds* 1 34-43

¹⁹ Cf his *Sixteen Sermons* (Boston, 1755), p 417, note, reprinted in Sprague *Unitarian Pulpit* p 28

²⁰ *v supra*, p 245. Doubtless done with Mayhew's knowledge, or at his instigation. Cf Frederick Hugh Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology* (Chicago 1907), pp 274-277

²¹ A considerably abridged *Extracts from an Humble Inquiry* etc., was published at Boston in 1790, with a new preface. Answered by Caleb Alexander, *An Essay on the Real Deity of Jesus Christ* (Boston, 1791)

drop, he next appealed to another quarter for aid, from his son-in-law, President Aaron Burr of Princeton, who responded with a book on *The Supreme Deity of Our Lord Jesus Christ*.²² Evidence of the effect of Emlyn's book appeared the same year in southern New Hampshire, where a group of the churches published at Portsmouth a revision of the Shorter Catechism, omitting the doctrine of the Trinity, and otherwise harmonizing it with the teachings of the English Arian John Taylor.²³ Another outcome of the controversy appeared in 1758 at Leominster, where the Rev. John Rogers was dismissed from his pulpit for not believing the Divinity of Christ.²⁴

From this time on until his premature death in 1766 Mayhew was ever more occupied and influential in political questions which were to issue only in the war with England, and it was natural that after his death he was called the father of civil and religious liberty in Massachusetts and America. Many years later Dr. James Freeman of King's Chapel acknowledged him as the first public advocate in Boston of the strict Unity of God.²⁵ As his views were unwaveringly supported by his congregation, and as all his successors shared them, his church though it never adopted the Unitarian name may be called the earliest Unitarian church in America.²⁶ The type of belief represented by Mayhew quietly spread until well before the end of the century it was held by a large proportion of the churches in eastern Massachusetts. The four ministers above mentioned may be taken as fairly illustrating what was going on in liberal circles of the Massachusetts churches during the generation after the Great Awakening. None of these may truly be called Unitarian (although this has often been done), for while they had clearly ceased to hold the doctrine of the Trinity, they should not be considered more than Arian; and they did not regard their view as heresy since it was widely held in the English Church and by Dissenters. They revered Christ far above humanity, as a

²² For Edwards's letter and Wigglesworth's reply, see Joseph S. Clark, *Historical Sketch of the Congregational Churches in Massachusetts* (Boston, 1858), pp. 180-184. Burr's work, Boston, 1757; reprinted, Boston, 1791.

²³ Cf. Joseph Bellamy, *Works* (New York, 1812), iii, 287.

²⁴ Cf. Walker, *Congregational Churches*, p. 278 f.

²⁵ In his sermon on the death of Simeon Howard.

²⁶ Cf. *The West Church and its Ministers* (Boston, 1856), pp. 189-195; Bradford, *Jonathan Mayhew*, pp. 465-468.

being worthy of the highest reverence short of Godhead, a sinless being, infallible, incarnating the power, wisdom and love of God, and the object of religious trust and love. They advocated simple, undogmatic Christianity, accepted the authority of the Bible, and hoped for salvation through faith in Christ.

In the account thus far given, we have been concerned solely with the Congregational churches. Before following the course of the movement among them further, we must turn to a movement in a quite different quarter. We shall see how a kindred tendency arose quite independently in an Episcopal church, which ended in its severance from the Church of England, and in its becoming closely associated with the liberal wing of the Congregational churches. King's Chapel, Boston, was established in 1686 to accommodate those that wished to worship according to the Book of Common Prayer, and it was steadily used until March 1776, when the British troops evacuated Boston and the Rector, Dr. Henry Caner, went with them to Halifax, taking the church plate and other things. The congregation, mostly royalists, were dispersed, and the chapel was closed until late the next year, when use was granted to the congregation of the Old South Church, which had been desecrated by the British cavalry. They worshiped here until 1783, when their own church had now been restored. Meanwhile the remaining proprietors of the chapel resolved to resume their worship, and as no clergyman could at once be obtained, Mr. James Freeman, a recent graduate from Harvard, who had been preparing for the ministry, was in 1782 invited to serve as Reader, and later as Pastor, to conduct the worship, and to use his own or others' sermons, with leave to omit the Athanasian Creed, and to make such other changes in the service as seemed best.²⁷ But the scruples he already held as to the Trinity increased, and he felt ere long that he could no longer with good conscience use the Prayer Book as it was. He therefore took the members into his confidence, and at their request preached several sermons on Christian doctrine as he held it. They were heard with general sympathy, and as a consequence it was voted to revise the Liturgy, and a committee was appointed to recommend desirable changes. These were duly made and adopted June 19, 1785, and by this act 'the first Episcopal church in New England became the first Uni-

²⁷ Cf. Sprague, *Unitarian Pulpit*, pp. 162-176; Eliot, *Heralds*, ii, 1-19; William Ware, *American Unitarian Biography* (Boston, 1850), i, 139-156.

tarian church in America.'²⁸ The changes were adopted by a vote of twenty to seven, and in the main were alterations shown in Dr. Samuel Clarke's draft of a reformed Liturgy and adopted in Lindsey's Reformed Prayer Book for Essex Street Chapel. The chief omissions were of the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds, and of passages concerning or implying the Trinity. Not all the changes that Mr. Freeman desired were made; but in 1811 a further revision was authorized, and the Apostles' Creed was then omitted.²⁹

The congregation still considered themselves Episcopalians, not meaning by their action to sever their connection with the Church. But their minister had never received ordination. When the American Episcopal Church was becoming sufficiently organized, separately from the Church of England, inquiry was therefore made of two of its leading clergymen whether ordination could be had for Mr. Freeman. When after considerable time it became apparent that no early reply, if any, could be expected, the society, weary of delays, determined after mature deliberation to ordain Mr. Freeman themselves, which was solemnly done November 18, 1787.³⁰

²⁸ These are the words, often quoted, used by the Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, *History of King's Chapel* (Boston, 1833), p. 139. But in the interest of accuracy it should be stated that as early as 1640 an Episcopal church had been organized at Portsmouth, N. H. Cf. William White, *Memoirs of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (New York, 1880), p. xxiii.

²⁹ In this year Freeman was honored with the Doctor's degree from Harvard.

Very soon after the King's Chapel Liturgy had been adopted, the American Episcopal Church in course of its reorganization had to consider what modifications were desirable in its Prayer Book, in view of the Revolution. There was wide difference of opinion, the New England congregation being (perhaps in reaction from King's Chapel) quite conservative, those of the central and southern States being more liberal. A committee appointed for the purpose presented to the Convention a tentative "Proposed Book," which omitted the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds and several other passages thought not generally acceptable. The English Bishops, whose approval was considered essential, insisted on retaining the Nicene Creed, but the Athanasian which they also urged found no favor. Many of the changes adopted were identical with those already printed in the King's Chapel Liturgy. Cf. White, *Memoirs*, pp. xlviii, 121 ff; Henry Wilder Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel* (Boston, 1896), ii, 382. For the text of the "Proposed Book," see William McGarvey, *Liturgiae Americanae* (Philadelphia, 1907).

³⁰ Cf. Foote, *Annals*, ii, 384-389; Greenwood, *History*, pp. 180-196; Lindsey, *Vindiciae*, pp. 31-36. Deserving of record here is the influential part taken by a visiting English Unitarian minister, the Rev. William Hazlitt (1737-1817). Born in Ireland, educated at Glasgow, he entered the Unitarian ministry, served several churches and became friend of Priestley, Price, Kippis and Dr. Franklin. He strongly sympathized with the American cause and befriended American prisoners in their camp near him in Ireland. Seeking settlement in America he went in 1783 to Philadelphia where there

Just before Mr. Freeman's ordination a protest was given the Wardens, in which some of the former proprietors of the Chapel protested against the ordination, as well as against the revised Liturgy. The Wardens published an ample reply,³¹ fully vindicating the actions taken. A few weeks later, however, a more formal protest, signed by six clergymen of the Episcopal Church,³² was circulated in a handbill, and later reprinted in the newspapers at Mr. Freeman's request, declaring the proceedings to be irregular and unconstitutional, and cautioning all churchmen against recognizing Freeman as a clergyman of the Church, or holding any communion with him, or regarding his congregation as a valid Episcopal church. Though their ecclesiastical affairs were not sufficiently organized to decree a regular excommunication, this was regarded as virtually equivalent. No further attempt was made to secure episcopal ordination, and Freeman was henceforth ignored by the Episcopalians.³³

Congregational ministers of Boston without exception treated the ordination as valid, and it was ably defended in the press by the Rev. Jeremy Belknap of the church in Long Lane, and the Rev. Joseph

were many English. He lectured there on Evidences of Christianity; printed several Unitarian tracts in 1784, including Priestley, *Appeal of the Pious* (cf. W. C. Hazlitt, *Four Generations*, p. 44); preached in several churches in the vicinity, but found no settlement because of orthodox opposition, though he declined calls to Charleston and Pittsburg.

Removing to Boston in 1784 he found King's Chapel in a state of transition, gave Freeman much assistance in revising the Liturgy, and convinced the members of their right to ordain their own minister. He delivered his series of lectures on Evidences and published a 'Scriptural Confutation of the 39 Articles,' which had much influence on opinion. He preached many times at Hingham, hoping to succeed Dr. Gay, and elsewhere, and spent the winter at Hallowell, Maine, where the English Unitarian Samuel Vaughan whom he had met at Philadelphia had extensive properties. (Cf. J. T. Rutt, ed., *Life of Joseph Priestley*, I, II, 406). Early in 1787, discouraged by his prospects he returned to England (just before Dr. Gay's death), and settled in "a retired corner" at Wem in Shropshire. Cf. a letter on religion in America, *Monthly Repository*, III (1808), 302-307; William Carew Hazlitt, *Four Generations of a Literary Family* (London, 1897), *id.*, *The Hazlitts* (Edinburgh, 1911), letters by Hazlitt, *Christian Rejoice*, v (1838), 505, etc.; Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 238-243.

³¹ Cf. Greenwood, *History*, pp. 183-192; Foote, *Annals*, II, 386-393.

³² The Rev. William W. Wheeler of Situate refused to sign.

³³ Cf. Greenwood, *History*, p. 197 f; Foote, *Annals*, II, 393. In view of the interest previously expressed by the Rev. Nathaniel Fisher of St. Peter's Church, Salem, in the revival of the Liturgy, Mr. Freeman sent him a presentation copy which, however, he returned with no little discourtesy. When asked how he could read the Athanasian Creed without believing it, he replied, "I read it as if I did *not* believe it." Cf. Sprague, *Unitarian Pulpit*, p. 271; Foote, *Annals*, p. 171.

Eckley of the Old South, to whose congregation King's Chapel had shown hospitality for more than five years during the late war, was the first to propose an exchange of pulpits with the newly ordained Mr. Freeman. But the Congregational churches in the main held aloof, for King's Chapel had proceeded much faster and further in reformation of doctrine than any one but Mayhew had yet thought it well to do. Meanwhile news of the revised Liturgy had reached London in 1776 and was heard with great pleasure, and an intimate correspondence followed between Freeman and Lindsey, who presented to the library of Harvard College copies of his own and Dr. Priestley's works, which found eager readers. From now on writings of the English Unitarians were more and more read in America, where their works had hitherto been little known, but were now the more welcome since leading English Unitarians had openly sympathized with the Colonies in the late war, and were regarded as friends of the Americans.⁸⁴

Perhaps no other group of the old New England churches followed the startling developments at King's Chapel with 'so little misgiving, or showed Mr. Freeman so prompt and hearty welcome, as was the case at Salem. Here were three old and prosperous churches whose core was made up of men engaged in foreign commerce as merchants or ship-masters. Their far travels to oriental lands had made them cosmopolitan in their sympathies, and their business contacts with high-minded heathen, whose business principles did not suffer from comparison with those of Christians, enlarged their religious views. In such an environment liberal views of Christianity naturally took root.⁸⁵ They certainly ceased to be orthodox, though it is quite impossible to say when. These three churches had in the last quarter of the eighteenth century three young ministers lately out of Harvard. Youngest of the three was William Bentley (1759-1819) of the East Church. He was college classmate of Freeman, and both of them became pronounced Unitarians and very early exchanged pulpits. Bentley was a deeply learned man, and was said to understand twenty or more languages.

⁸⁴ The Harvard College library catalogue of 1773 lists hardly a single Unitarian author; but from the late eighties on entries are frequent. Noteworthy also are instances of honorary degrees conferred in this period by American colleges — Princeton, Yale, Brown, Harvard — on men in the English Unitarian tradition.

⁸⁵ For an account of these churches, cf. George Batchelor on 'The Ecclesiastical and the Secular Origins of Unitarianism in Salem,' in his *Social Equilibrium* (Boston, 1887), pp. 259-286.

He took little interest in the Unitarian controversy; but his private diary shows that long before Channing he had become a bold disciple of Priestley, whose writings he was reading with approval in 1786, and whose views he preached in 1791. He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Harvard in 1819. John Prince (1751-1836) was minister of the First Church from 1779 on, and besides being diligent in his ministry he had a reputation both at home and abroad for his scientific discoveries, and was honored with the degree of Doctor of Laws from Brown University. But he was also a very learned theologian, and had a large and valuable theological library, filled with English Unitarian books. Although he refrained from controversy and continued to have friendly relations with both sides, it was well known that his sympathies were on the liberal side. Thomas Barnard (1748-1814) of the North Church did not betray his doctrinal opinions in his sermons, and some supposed him to be conservative; but when one of his parishioners, seeking to get him to commit himself said, "Dr. Barnard, I never heard you preach a sermon upon the Trinity," he promptly replied, "And you never will." He and his congregation had changed their ground so quietly that no one ever knew when the change took place. Both Edinburgh and Brown Universities honored him with the Doctor's degree.⁸⁸

If the churches at Salem moved faster and further from the old theology than most others of the period, it was largely because they were directly influenced by English Unitarians. The decay of Calvinism in most of the other old churches came from their independent study of the Bible as the fountain of their doctrine, and it passed slowly through the stages of Arminianism and Arianism; but the more rapid transition of the Salem churches seems to have been due to the fact that Freeman directly interested them in the advanced writings of Priestley, who had already outgrown Arianism. Hence it was thirty years before the other churches reached the point at which the Salem churches had already arrived. This direct influence of English Unitarianism was also felt farther down the coast at Portland, where a Unitarian society was formed in 1792. The leader of the movement was an Episcopal layman, one Thomas Oxnard, a former resident who had returned to Portland from Boston in 1784. Meaning to enter the

⁸⁸ For Bentley, Prince and Barnard, cf. Sprague, *Unitarian Pulpit*, pp. 154-157, 128-132, 16-18; Eliot, *Heralds*, i, 131-154.

ministry he was appointed lay reader of the Episcopal church, and served in this office until 1792. But in Boston he had to come to know the lay reader at King's Chapel, Freeman, who gave him the works of Lindsey and Priestley to read and thus led him to adopt Unitarian views. In consequence, finding general sympathy in his congregation, he proposed to introduce a reformed Liturgy, and when one or two leading members opposed this, the majority seceded, formed the Unitarian Society, and chose Oxnard as their minister. This was the earliest church in the country to adopt the Unitarian name, and both Freeman and Bentley of Salem made contributions to it; but it survived only a few years. Oxnard died in 1799, and no successor was found. Some of the members returned to the Episcopal church, and some were absorbed into the First Parish, which later became Unitarian.³⁷

Another instance of an effort to transplant Unitarianism directly from England is found in an ephemeral movement in New York. Early in 1794 one John Butler, a layman arrived from Bristol the previous autumn, inserted in the *Daily Advertiser*, New York, an address 'to the clergy,' and at the end of February he inserted a notice inviting 'the Friends of Free Inquiry' to a course of lectures on the Unity of God, to be given at Mr. Barden's large assembly room in Cortlandt Street near Broadway, the same to be followed by questions and discussion, and to be continued on subsequent evenings.³⁸ The audiences grew to an extent which alarmed the clergy, who bitterly attacked the movement, and a public debate was held. The city was at the time much infected by French infidelity, and Butler apparently aimed to controvert this, though not on orthodox grounds. Early in March the First Unitarian Society of New York was organized; but Butler soon fell ill, and after May we hear no more of it. The clergy, however, girded themselves for an imminent struggle, for an English visitor writes of them shortly after (June 15, 1794), "They are really afraid of Dr. Priestley, and are preparing publications against Unitarianism,

³⁷ At about the same time with Portland a liberal movement was taking shape in the neighboring community of Saco-Biddeford, where the Second Religious Society in Biddeford was formed in 1795 and incorporated in 1797 on liberal principles. It is said afterwards to have had its own minister, but its early history is obscure. Cf. Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 245-250; see also Vincent Brown Silliman's article in the *Maine Unitarian* (Saco, spring issue, 1946).

³⁸ Cf. *Daily Advertiser* (New York), *passim*, January to April, 1794; *Christian Register* (Boston), 1894, p. 308, article by Robert Collyer on 'One Hundred Years ago'; John Bach McMaster, *History of the United States* (New York, 1907), ii, 238-241.

making no doubt of a complete victory.³⁹ Priestley landed early in June⁴⁰ and was received with particular distinction by many prominent citizens and with formal addresses from a number of societies, but no pulpit was open to him.

After two weeks in New York Priestley proceeded to Philadelphia where he had numerous friends old and new, and thence to his destination at Northumberland, where his sons had settled. He soon had flattering invitations to teach in various colleges, and also to give courses of lectures, but he declined them all and built a residence and laboratory, evidently hoping to find settlement and to pursue his favorite calling as a preacher, and his favorite recreation as a chemist. He at once began holding religious worship every Sunday, and administering the Lord's Supper at his own or his son's house, to which perhaps a dozen English friends came, gradually increasing to twenty or thirty, and later meeting regularly in a log schoolhouse near by.⁴¹ It does not appear, however, that a regular church organization was formed. But in the winter of his second year he spent three months in Philadelphia, where he was given the use of the Universalist pulpit,⁴² and delivered twelve lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, to which he added a sermon on Unitarianism. His lectures were given to crowded audiences, and were attended by the Vice-President and many of the members of Congress, the seat of government still being at Philadelphia. The success of these lectures so much encouraged him that in the spring of 1797 he delivered a second series, this time in the University common hall, but for various reasons they were not nearly so well attended, and he attempted no more public addresses.

A more far-reaching result of his visit to Philadelphia was the gathering of the first permanent Unitarian church in America.⁴³ Since 1790 many Englishmen had come to the United States, Unitarians among

³⁹ Cf. Henry Wansey, *Excursion to the United States of America* (Salisbury, 1798), ed. 2, p. 191.

⁴⁰ *v. supra*, p. 313.

⁴¹ He continued to hold these services until January, 1804, the last month of his life. Cf. his *Life*, ed. Rutt, I, II, 527.

⁴² The church, recently built, was at Fourth and Lombard Streets. The minister was the pioneer Universalist preacher, the Rev. Elhanan Winchester, whom Priestley had previously met in London.

⁴³ That is, the first to be permanently established, and openly avowing the Unitarian name. This is not forgetting the ephemeral case at Portland, *v. supra* p. 395. A futile attempt to settle a Unitarian minister at Philadelphia is said to have been made in 1792.

them; and during his first visit to Philadelphia in 1796 Priestley became acquainted with a number of them, and encouraged them to form a Unitarian church, even though they had no minister. Early in the following summer, and without further suggestion from him, fourteen English Unitarians, mostly young men, met and formed The First Society of Unitarian Christians in Philadelphia. The leaders of the young church were John Vaughan, of a family prominent in the Unitarian cause in England and afterwards in America; Ralph Eddowes, who had been Priestley's pupil at Warrington, sometime Member of Parliament for London, and had now come to Philadelphia in 1793, and James Taylor. Eddowes was apparently the leading spirit. It was agreed that meetings should be held every Sunday at the usual hour, and that the services should be conducted by the members in rotation; though before long the office of reader was taken by only the three named, and they soon began to write their own sermons.

After being for a time driven from place to place they found rest in Church Alley, where the little church for a time grew beyond Priestley's expectations. But a severe epidemic of yellow fever carried off several of the members, while others removed from town, and by 1800 numbers had sadly declined, so that Priestley despaired of the cause. Still a handful continued to meet every Sunday, and when Priestley was again in town early in 1803 he preached to a considerable number. Congregations began to grow again so much that he judged that a settled preacher would be acceptable, and late in 1803 he recommended that the Rev. William Christie, who was just leaving Northumberland, be called.⁴⁴ At length, at the end of 1806, the members invited him to be their minister, and he began preaching in February, 1807, while still continuing to teach. The church was reorganized, and a Constitution was adopted; but as Christie thought this gave too much power to the members and too little to the minister, he withdrew with a minority faction and formed an Independent Society of Unitarian Christians,

⁴⁴ Christie had been Unitarian preacher at Montrose and Glasgow (*v. supra*, p. 320), and after coming to America in 1794 had first taught a school at Winchester, Va., while also preaching, for he was a zealous Unitarian. In 1801 he removed to Northumberland in order to be near Priestley, and lived there for two years before resuming his teaching near Philadelphia. Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xix (1824), 363. He contributed a valuable Appendix to Priestley's *Life*, giving a 'Review of Dr. Priestley's Theological and Philosophical Works.' See Joseph Priestley, *Memoirs of Dr. Joseph Priestley* (London, 1807), ii, 1-325.

which however did not survive.⁴⁵ The parent church continued holding lay services until 1825, when after twenty-nine years of lay preaching a minister was settled.⁴⁶ A church building had meantime been erected with English aid in 1813.⁴⁷

Having traced the beginnings of the liberal movement in the places or regions where it first developed, down to the point where division of the churches was impending, we can now survey the field as it lay in the last decade of the eighteenth century, while the Congregational Church, though embracing a wide diversity of opinions and feelings, was still unbroken. During the absorbing period of the American Revolution, discussion of religious questions was of course postponed, so that there was no general controversy; and the liberal ministers confined themselves to preaching practical sermons, and let dogmas and creeds alone, urging generous tolerance as to points on which there was disagreement. During the war the orthodox had relaxed their vigilance; but when the war had passed, the teachings of Edwards and his followers, which had all along strongly prevailed in Western Massachusetts and Connecticut, somewhat revived in the eastern counties. The conservative churches began to awake, to cultivate a more active and earnest religion, and to be more sensitive to the doctrines heard from the pulpit.⁴⁸ A Great Awakening *redivivus* seemed to be taking place, and churches began to require those joining them to subscribe creeds, and to ask candidates for ordination to the ministry to submit to a searching examination.

The liberals on their part were not indifferent. In 1790 Emlyn's *Humble Inquiry* which had caused so much anxiety a generation ago was reprinted and called forth two replies. Some of the leading English Unitarians, whose sympathies had been with the Colonies, had also maintained correspondence with a number of the liberals in Massachusetts from 1785 on, and sent over their religious writings along

⁴⁵ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, iii (1818), 54 f, 288 f, 643-646, 688-690. Meeting in North Sixth Street. According to *Unitarian Miscellany*, v, 150, December 1823, Christie died Nov. 21, 1823, at Long Branch, his son-in-law's.

⁴⁶ Eddowes resigned his ministry in 1822, after thirteen years' service.

⁴⁷ This was the first church building bearing the Unitarian name to be erected in America. Cf. *Monthly Repository*, vii (1812), 58; xviii (1823), 349.

⁴⁸ Complaint was made that the "doctrines of grace" were being neglected in preaching. They were these (see *Panoplist*, xii, 361-367): The Sovereignty and Decrees of God; Total Depravity; Personal Election; Regeneration by the Holy Spirit; the Divinity and Atonement of Christ; Trinity in Unity; Justification by Faith; Perseverance of the Saints.

with the political, and these were read as the words of friends, so that Bentley at Salem was openly preaching the views of Priestley as early as 1791. The Rev. Jeremy Belknap (1744-98), formerly at Dover, N. H., was called in 1787 to be minister of the Federal Street Church. He was already known as author of a *History of New Hampshire*, but was not known to be one of the liberal wing; but in 1793 he published (anonymously) a life of Isaac Watts,⁴⁹ which set many to doubting the doctrine of the Trinity; and between 1779 and 1792 he had abandoned the deity of Christ; and in 1795 he published (with the collaboration of Jedidiah Morse!) a *Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, which omitted any reference to the Trinity but was designed to be acceptable to Arians, and was very widely used in the Boston churches.⁵⁰ From this time on the liberal churches in Boston abandoned the use of Trinitarian doxologies in favor of Scriptural ones.

When the Rev. Ashbel Green, a young Presbyterian minister from Philadelphia (later to be President of Princeton College) made a summer tour of the New England States, and visited the more important churches and ministers in the summer of 1791, he noted that many of the ministers were unsound in the faith, and that the Boston clergy included Calvinists, Universalists, Arminians, Arians, and one Socinian, though Freeman was the only professed Arian.⁵¹ When ten years later the Rev. Archibald Alexander, President of a college in Virginia (later to be founder of Princeton Theological Seminary) made a similar tour, he found the situation yet worse. Heretics of various types were found, though they agreed on no point save opposition to the Trinity. All the talented young men at Harvard were reported to be liberal, and generally to ridicule orthodox views, while conservative ministers were attempting to stem the tide by introducing creeds and confessions of faith as tests.⁵² It was reported that in 1800 out of the 200 churches east of Worcester County 125 were liberal, as were 18 out of 20 in Plymouth County, and 8 out of 9 in Boston.⁵³

⁴⁹ *Memoirs of the Lives, Characters and Writings of . . . Dr. Isaac Watts and Dr. Philip Doddridge* (Boston, 1793).

⁵⁰ Cf. Sprague, *Unitarian Pulpit*, pp. 73-83; Eliot, *Heralds*, i, 98-108.

⁵¹ Cf. Joseph H. Jones, *Life of Ashbel Green* (New York, 1849), pp. 217-230.

⁵² Cf. James W. Alexander, *Life of Archibald Alexander* (New York, 1852), pp. 251-258.

⁵³ Cf. Joseph S. Clark, *Historical Discourse at Plymouth . . . 16 May, 1855* (Boston, 1855), p. 26 n., cited by Gillett, *Unitarian Controversy*, p. 239.

In the pulpits of the Boston churches, however, there was during this period no doctrinal controversy, for all the Congregational churches had liberal ministers.⁵⁴ Not a single strictly Trinitarian minister remained. It was not fair to call these liberal churches Unitarian, in the sense in which the name was then used in England where it had originated,⁵⁵ for they wholly disagreed with the views that Priestley and Belsham were emphasizing, which seemed to them extreme; and Priestley received no welcome from the Boston liberals when he came to America in 1794. But on principle they abstained from pulpit controversy as unprofitable, confined their preaching to practical undogmatic themes, cultivated personal relations with their orthodox brethren, exchanged pulpits with them, and joined with them in the same programs at Councils, ordinations and dedications. In fact, it looked as though Massachusetts Congregationalism were on the way to become a simple, undogmatic form of religion, attaching little fundamental importance to creeds, but leaving each person free to be as liberal or as conservative as he pleased, while all strove together to cultivate reverent, positive Christian personal character, and to promote a Christian civilization. Nevertheless, despite all wishes and hopes of lovers of peace and harmony, it must have been evident that though there was as yet no division, yet sooner or later questions now evaded or suppressed must come up for settlement, and that to bring them to the fore there was needed only some situation calling for positive action. Such a situation was to arise early in the nineteenth century, and the person to take the most active part in agitating it during the next twenty-five years was the Rev. Jedidiah Morse, with whom the next chapter will have to deal.

⁵⁴ Although the Old South Church remained nominally orthodox by the narrowest margin, its minister, Dr. Eckley, denied the supreme Divinity of Christ, and was the first minister to offer Freeman an exchange of pulpits after his ordination.

⁵⁵ *v. supra*, vol. I, 642 f.

CHAPTER XXI

THE PERIOD OF CONTROVERSY: 1800-1825

ALTHOUGH IN 1800 no general public controversy had as yet arisen among the Congregational churches, still it was every year more evident that material was accumulating which at some critical juncture would burst forth into flame. As the churches were constituted, no action could be taken by the denomination as a whole, but only by separate independent congregations; and differences in these could arise whenever a new minister was to be called, or an existing one was for any cause to be dismissed. In such a case the line was likely to be drawn between the evangelicals (as they preferred to call themselves) and the liberals; and unless there was a predominating general agreement, members would be divided, according to their preference for a conservative candidate from Andover (after the establishing of the Seminary there in 1808), or for a liberal one from Harvard. Even before the turn of the century there were a few cases of such divisions. The earliest was in the church at Worcester. Here Aaron Bancroft¹ (1755-1839), lately graduated from Harvard with high honors, preached as a candidate, and was the choice of an influential minority of the congregation; but he had already rejected the theology of Calvin and was a convinced Arian, while the majority preferred a conservative. His friends therefore chose to separate, and in the face of determined and heated opposition from the conservatives they succeeded in withdrawing and organizing the Second Church in 1784. He was ordained in February, 1786, Dr. Barnard of Salem preaching the sermon. This was the first church in New England to separate on doctrinal grounds, and to organize on a basis of complete religious liberty. At a time when some of the churches were beginning to draw the lines more strictly, and requiring members to subscribe creeds or confessions of faith, Bancroft's new church adopted as their bond of union simply belief in the Scriptures as the sole rule of faith and practice. He had taken his stand

¹ Cf. Sprague, *Unitarian Pulpit*, pp. 132-140; Eliot, *Heralds*, ii, 20-40; Bancroft, *Sermons on the Termination of Fifty Years of his Ministry* (1836).

even earlier than Freeman, and they had consulted about the latter's ordination, in which he was to assist had not the King's Chapel society decided to ordain him themselves.² Early in his ministry he and his people were largely ostracized by the other churches, and the other ministers refused to exchange pulpits with him, denounced, reviled and shunned him, but he continued until he had won universal respect and had become one of the leaders in his denomination.

Another case of division on doctrinal grounds was at Taunton, where in 1792 the entire Church except four members, in protest against the possible dismissal of the minister as too orthodox and the selection of a successor of questionable character, seceded and organized another society.³ A much more interesting case was that of the original Pilgrim church at Plymouth, where in 1800, on the death of a revered conservative pastor a very large majority of both Church and parish, now grown liberal, chose a liberal as his successor. The conservative minority, however, were discontented, and after a year half the members of the Church withdrew and organized a new church subscribing to the orthodox faith.

Yet a fourth instance of a church dividing over doctrinal questions at the turn of the century was at Fitchburg, where the Rev Samuel Worcester was settled in 1797, at a period when many revivals were in progress. In the course of the next year he had the covenant of the Church and its confession of faith revised and made more strict. There were numerous Universalists in the congregation who strongly opposed his Calvinistic preaching, especially his six sermons on eternal punishment, and opposition increased and dissension continued, while a succession of church Councils vainly attempted a settlement. At length in 1802 the minister was dismissed.⁴ After a few months he was settled over the Tabernacle Church at Salem, where a dozen years later he took an active part in a notable discussion of Unitarianism with Channing.

While these few congregations in the last decade of the eighteenth century were already heralding the inevitable separation of the evan-

² Cf. Ware, *Unitarian Biography*, 1, 173 n., in Hill's 'Memoir'.

³ Cf. Henry M. Dexter, *Congregationalism* (New York, 1880), p. 615.

⁴ Cf. Samuel M. Worcester, *Life of Rev Samuel Worcester* (Boston, 1852), *A Narrative of the Religious Controversy in Fitchburg*, etc. (Worcester, 1804), *Review of Narrative of the Religious Controversy in Fitchburg*, *Monthly Anthology*, 1 (1804), 654-657.

gelical from the liberal elements in the denomination, efforts continued to be made either to avoid or else to hasten the decisive step. As early as the seventies the Convention⁵ sermons had begun to reflect the doctrinal situation. In his sermon of 1768 John Tucker of Newbury urges *tolerance of difference of opinion* instead of insistence on doctrines of human origin. In the sermon of 1772 President Samuel Locke of Harvard, referring to attacks upon religion (apparently intending Deism) in books imported from overseas, shows a broad and tolerant spirit. In 1793 Thomas Barnard of Salem cries out against bigotry, and recommends making a kind allowance for different views of Christian doctrine; but in the following year Chandler Robbins of Plymouth insists that catholicity must not be construed as indifference in belief. Thus far the Convention sermons had mostly commended peace, forbearance and Christian charity toward brethren in the ministry; but with the new century an attempt was made to force liberals from the Convention,⁶ and it came to be tacitly taken for granted that the sermon should alternate between the two parties and emphasize differences more than agreements. Thus Dr. Emmons in 1804 urged the importance of unity in belief and doctrine, opposed tolerance toward differences and fraternal association with the unorthodox, and found many to echo his sentiments. Dr. Joseph Lyman of Hatfield in 1806 called for emphasis on the fundamental doctrines, stressing total depravity and the Divinity of Christ; while the next year John Reed of Bridgewater, though warning against indifference, made a fine plea for broad and wise tolerance, defending diversity of opinion and opposing divisions with their censorious judgments in matters of faith. Finally in 1810 Dr. Eliphalet Porter of Roxbury, hitherto ranked among the conservatives, would demand nothing beyond belief that Jesus was the Christ. Belief as to the doctrines of Calvin and orthodoxy is of so little importance that he will neither affirm nor deny them, since they are not essential to Christian faith or character, while complexity of doctrine alienates men from Christianity.

This unstable equilibrium among the ministers began in 1789 to be

⁵ The Ministerial Convention of Massachusetts was an annual gathering of all the ministers at the time of the May General Court. The Convention was accustomed to discuss the state of religion in the State, and to make suggestions to the churches. Cf. *supra*, p. 382 n.

⁶ Cf. Bernard Whitman, *Letters to the Reverend Moses Stuart* (Boston, 1830), p. 89 f.

upset by the accession to the evangelical party of an able and active aggressor in the person of the Rev. Jedidiah Morse (1761-1826) of Woodstock, Conn., who was called to the church at Charlestown, where he was for nearly thirty years the outstanding champion of the orthodox cause in Massachusetts. He was a graduate of Yale where he had briefly taught, and he had had a brief pastoral experience.⁷ He was known to be a moderate Calvinist, but he at once joined the Boston Association of Congregational Ministers, and despite known differences of belief he exchanged pulpits and had fraternal relations with the members for over twenty years. The clergy were averse to having anything said that might provoke controversy, nevertheless it was not long before he felt called upon to make his stand. A reprint of Emlyn's *Humble Inquiry*, which had stirred up controversy about the Trinity a generation before,⁸ was announced, and he felt in duty bound to bear witness. When his turn came therefore to preach the Thursday Lecture,⁹ he improved the opportunity to deliver three successive lectures on the Divinity of Christ. He realized that his was but a voice crying in the wilderness, and he confessed that he stood solitary among his brethren in the public defence of this doctrine; and eventually he withdrew from the Boston Association, joined a new Union Association of orthodox ministers, and no longer exchanged pulpits with the Boston brethren. For the present, however, nothing interrupted the outward harmony, although he early felt it important that, if the alarming spread of Arianism was to be halted, the two parties must separate and the orthodox must be effectively organized.

The first open disturbance of harmony came in 1803, when the death of Dr. David Tappan, Professor of Divinity at Harvard, left the Hollis Professorship vacant. This chair had been endowed in 1721 by Thomas Hollis (1659-1731), a wealthy Dissenting merchant of London. The

⁷ Cf. William B. Sprague, *Life of Jedidiah Morse* (New York, 1874); James King Morse, *Jedidiah Morse, a Champion of New England Orthodoxy* (New York, 1939). He had already given much attention to the neglected field of geography, and in 1784 had published the first geography in America, a work that won for him the name of Father of American Geography. *The American Geography* (Elizabethtown, N. J., rev. ed. 1789), 544 pp., 8vo, went through five editions within six years, besides several pirated editions abroad, there being as yet no international copyright. It was received with marked favor.

⁸ *v. supra*, p. 388.

⁹ The Thursday Lecture dates from Boston's early history. A week-day service was held in the First Church, at which the ministers in rotation preached a sermon which was called a lecture. It was often a notable occasion and largely attended.

first and most generous of six benefactors of Harvard who bore this name, he was by profession a Baptist,¹⁰ as was his father before him. It now became a crucial question whether the professor appointed should be of the orthodox or of the liberal persuasion. Appointments to the faculty were made by the Corporation, a body of six members, and must be confirmed by the Board of Overseers, which consisted partly of members of the State government and partly of ministers of Congregational churches in the six adjoining towns; but at the time of Tappan's death the Corporation was evenly divided, so that no choice could be agreed upon. The liberal candidate was the Rev. Henry Ware, Dr. Gay's successor at Hingham, and the orthodox candidate was the Rev. Jesse Appleton, later President of Bowdoin College. Ware was known to be an Arian, but when the orthodox charged that he was a Unitarian, the charge was indignantly denied as a calumny. Election hung fire for more than a year, virulent discussion meanwhile going on privately and in the press. At length the Corporation took the matter up, and after six meetings with no result the dead-lock was broken and choice was made, February 5, 1805, of Ware.¹¹ A week later, at a largely attended meeting of the Overseers, after a heated debate in which Dr. Morse took the leading part for the opposition, the election of Ware was ratified by a vote of 33 to 23. Dr. Morse was violently criticized by the liberals as having been influenced in his opposition by theological considerations. To justify his opposition he published in

¹⁰ He spoke of himself as a Baptist, and showed special concern for Baptists in relation to his bequests, although this was in his time a name of ill repute in New England. But there appears to be no evidence that he was ever a communicant of a Baptist church. At Sheffield, where his parents lived during his youth, they were adherents of the "great chapel" (an Independent foundation for Protestant Dissenters generally, which eventually became Unitarian), which his father helped erect, and until his death he was the most generous friend the congregation knew. In London, whither they removed, he succeeded to his father's business in wholesale hardware, and they worshiped at the Independent Church in Pinners' Hall, where at about seventeen he professed religion and was baptized, and was admitted the next year to membership in the church, of which he was chosen deacon. It would seem, then, that though he was undoubtedly a Baptist in conviction, his formal membership was with the Independents. Cf. C. J. Street, 'The Hollis Family and Harvard College,' *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, LXXI (1921), 536-540; Letter of January 17, 1721, to Dr. Benjamin Colman of Brattle Square Church, quoted by Morse, *True Reasons*, etc., pp. 5-9. Cf. Giles Hester, *Some Memorials of the Hollis Family* (Sheffield, n. d.).

¹¹ Cf. Sydney Willard, *Memoirs of Youth and Manhood* (Cambridge, 1855), ii, 172-179.

reply a pamphlet¹² in which he took the ground that Hollis was a consistent Calvinist, who intended that the incumbent of the chair he endowed should be an adherent of that faith, and that to elect him without examination of his belief would be a gross breach of trust. The Corporation on the other hand held that Hollis had required only that the professor at his inauguration should declare his belief that the Bible is the only and most perfect rule of faith and manners, and they declined to impose any further test than this.¹³

Professor Eliphalet Pearson, who also had opposed Ware's election, and had been acting-President, was so cast down by it that when he was also defeated for President he despaired of being able any longer to do the College useful service, at once resigned his chair, and withdrew from the Corporation. Dr. Morse also resigned as Overseer. For this election, soon followed by that of four other liberal men, made it clear that control of the College had passed out of the hands of the conservatives. This experience therefore determined them to establish an institution that should remain forever under strict orthodox control. Hence these two, together with some wealthy Calvinistic friends at Andover, now formed a plan to found there a school for the training of ministers. It fell out that about the same time a group of Hopkinsians were incubating a plan for a similar institution at Newbury, and though these two orthodox factions had been on anything but friendly relations, their common hostility to the liberals led them to overlook their mutual differences in order to present a united front against their common enemy.¹⁴ It called for adroit maneuvering to bring about hearty cooperation between both parties, but as a result the Andover Theological Seminary was opened in 1808 with an able faculty and a

¹² *The True Reasons on which the election of a Hollis Professor of Divinity was opposed*, etc (Charlestown, 1805), 28 pp. Reviewed in *Monthly Anthology*, II, 152-157, March, 1805, Morse's reply and reviewer's answer, *ibid.*, pp. 206-226.

¹³ Cf. the article on Thomas Hollis, *Christian Examiner* (Boston), VII (1829), 64-104, with one with the same title in *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, II (1829), 469-480, 581-594. See Quincy, *History of Harvard*, II, 284 f., vol. I, chap. XII and Appendix, 527-540. Thorough investigation there reported shows that Overseers at the time of the donation, moved by doctrinal fears, but without Hollis's approval or knowledge, inserted in his "rules and orders" a qualification calculated to prevent his broad purposes from being realized, but that he caused to be added a form for inauguration which gave the professor more liberty, as stated above. Dr. Morse's opposition was grounded on the clause thus inserted. Cf. Ware, *Unitarian Biography*, I, 243-256, note on the Hollis professorship.

¹⁴ Cf. Ezra Stiles Ely, *A Contrast between Calvinism and Hopkinsianism* (New York, 1811), reviewed in *General Repository*, III (1813), 324-378.

handsome endowment To ensure that its theological purity should never be impaired, as Harvard's had been, its Constitution (practically Morse's work) provided that its Professors should subscribe an elaborate Calvinistic creed, and should renew their subscription every five years, and that the creed should "forever remain entirely and identically the same, without the least alteration, addition or diminution."¹⁵ The new Seminary, the first institution of its kind in America, filled its place worthily for several generations¹⁶

Dr. Morse was also exerting his efforts in another quarter. As a newcomer to Massachusetts he complained at length in print of the low standard of the churches as to the beliefs of the ministers and the disuse of creeds and confessions, and he therefore urged a closer organization as a safeguard against the spread of heresy. But he found the churches united only in a loose Ministerial Convention which did hardly more than meet once a year and listen to a sermon There were indeed some local Associations, though they were stubbornly devoted to their traditional Congregational independence, and jealous of any infringement of it But in 1802, largely as a result of Morse's efforts, steps were taken looking toward a closely organized State Ministerial Association on the basis of the Westminster Catechism. A hundred years before Cotton Mather had recommended the establishment of Consociations,¹⁷ which should settle questions arising between ministers and churches These were indeed formed in Connecticut early in

¹⁵ Cf *Monthly Anthology* v (1808), 602-614, for a drastic review of the 'Constitution and Associate Statutes of the Theological Seminary in Andover,' anonymous, but by Samuel Cooper Thacher (1785-1818) yet 23 (cf Sprague, *Unitarian Pulpit*, pp 435-445; Eliot, *Heralds* 11, 77-79, Memoir by F W P Greenwood, prefixed to his *Sermons*, Boston, 1824, and in Ware, *Unitarian Biography* 11, 323-375), answered in the *Panoplist*, 14 (1808-09), 371, 413, 471, rejoinder by Thacher, *Anthology*, vi (1809), 194-205

¹⁶ The scope of this history does not require us to follow the history of Andover further, yet it is interesting to note in passing that eventually the requirements of the founders proved to be intolerable After some three generations the Professors refused longer to subscribe, or resigned their chairs, no satisfactory substitutes could be found, the number of students fell off, and subscription was no longer enforced In 1908, just a hundred years after its foundation, the Seminary removed to Cambridge and entered into alliance with its old rival, the Harvard Divinity School When the Visitors interposed and insisted that the provisions of the Constitution be obeyed, the Court decided that this was no longer possible The Trustees were then permitted to do the next best thing, and forces were combined with a Baptist school, the Newton Theological Institution

¹⁷ A Consociation was an ecclesiastical court, consisting of ministers and lay delegates of churches, empowered to intervene upon all questions arising between ministers and churches In Connecticut its decrees were supported by the civil power.

the eighteenth century, though opposed in Massachusetts. Had they been adopted as Morse's committee recommended, the churches would have surrendered their individual independence and become subjected to the jurisdiction of a Consociation. Thus a conservative majority in the Consociation could outlaw a liberal congregation — which was precisely what Dr. Morse sought to make possible. But when the plan was submitted to the General Association in 1815 it was not favored, and it was not heard of again. Thus this scheme for thwarting liberal tendencies in the churches came to naught.¹⁸

At the beginning of the nineteenth century various elements were tending to sharpen the differences between the churches, and foreshadowing a coming division. These were to be discerned in new periodicals, in new voices in the pulpit, in books proclaiming new doctrines, in congregations dividing between the old faith and the new, in popular movements of minor denominations reaching out for a new freedom; and in contrast to these a reactionary current of influences attempting to restore and confirm the faith of the fathers, and to fortify its institutions against insidious or open attack. First of these heralds was the *Monthly Anthology* (1804-11), the first literary and critical magazine of note published in America.¹⁹ It was published by a club of young gentlemen, mostly liberals,²⁰ and though it was not theological in its purpose, at the very beginning of the Unitarian Controversy it incidentally contained several articles that vigorously supported the liberal views. To counteract this Dr. Morse in the next year at his own expense founded the *Panoplist* (1805-22), which he at first largely wrote himself. It soon had a circulation of 2,000, and carried on a vigorous, aggressive warfare against the liberals, persistently trying to draw them out and openly to confess and defend their views. The *Panoplist* while it lasted doubtless did more than any other single agency to kindle and inflame the controversy.

¹⁸ Cf. Clark, *Historical Sketch*, pp. 237-241, 252 f., *Panoplist*, xi (1815), 359-373, 507-518, 537-545; searchingly answered (by John Lowell), *An Inquiry into the Right to Change the Ecclesiastical Constitution of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1816). For an account of the long effort to establish Consociations in Massachusetts, cf. Whitman, *Letters to Stuart*, pp. 29-37.

¹⁹ It was succeeded by the more controversial and short-lived *General Repository and Review* (Cambridge, 1812-13), ably edited by Mr. Andrews Norton; but this was too aggressive for the time, and soon gave place to the *Christian Disciple* (v. infra, p. 410).

²⁰ Cf. *Journal of the Proceedings of the Society which conducts The Monthly Anthology*, ed. M. A. DeWolfe Howe (Boston, 1919).

At about the same time several new voices in the pulpit were claiming attention. In 1803 William Ellery Channing, not yet aggressively liberal, though from the beginning of his ministry he had scrupulously abstained from any expression implying the Trinity, became minister of the Federal Street Church at the age of twenty-three; Joseph Stevens Buckminster two years later came to the Brattle Square Church when not quite twenty-one; and William Emerson, Samuel Cooper Thacher, and Edward Everett entered their brilliant but brief ministries in Boston. In conservative pulpits also there were notable recruits. Dr. Morse in 1808 procured for his friend the Rev. Joshua Huntington settlement as colleague pastor of the Old South Church, and a few months later the Rev. John Codman was ordained as minister of the Second Church in Dorchester, Channing taking part in the ordination of both; and in 1811 Dr. Edward D. Griffin became pastor of the new Park Street Church, where he eloquently expounded the system of Calvinism in its strictest Hopkinsian form.

From various quarters printed books made their contribution; and in this period several English Unitarian books were reprinted in Boston. In 1805 the Rev. Hosea Ballou, the most eminent and influential of the early preachers of Universalism, published a book of Universalist doctrine in which he plainly took issue with the doctrine of the Trinity.²¹ This was the first book in America openly to deny this doctrine, though it probably did not much influence the current of Unitarian thought. Later in the same year the Rev. John Sherman (1772-1824) of Mansfield, Conn. published a book which reflects the influence of Priestley, and shows a painstaking study of the New Testament teaching. It also shows acquaintance with the writings of scholars, and after examining and confuting scriptural arguments for the Trinity, gives positive grounds for believing that Christ was distinct from God, inferior to him and dependent upon him. This was the first detailed attack made in America against the orthodox dogma.²²

A few years later Noah Worcester (1758-1837), an honored country minister in New Hampshire, who had been influenced by no Unitarian writing and had conversed with no Unitarian, but had given some years to serious investigation of the Bible teaching on the subject, published a book on the Trinity which, though not actually Unitarian

²¹ *Treatise on the Atonement*, etc. (Randolph, 1808).

²² *v. infra*, p. 411.

indeed, but only mildly Arian, yet stirred up angry controversy among his brother ministers, lest they be suspected of sharing his views.²³ He had previously discussed his views with numerous ministers of the Association to which he belonged, and they had taken no offence; but no sooner had he put them into print than they hastened to pass a vote condemning the work, attacked him bitterly, and even maligned his personal character. He was deeply grieved at such treatment from those who had hitherto been his professed friends, and at being virtually driven out of his church; but his little book produced a marked impression throughout New England, provoked several replies, and called forth sympathy from some of the leading ministers.²⁴ Channing therefore, with three others, asked him to become editor of a new religious periodical, the *Christian Disciple*, which it was felt that the liberal cause needed to replace the *Monthly Anthology* and the *General Repository*. He edited the *Christian Disciple* from its beginning in 1813 to 1818, and in 1824 it was succeeded by the *Christian Examiner*. While he gave a measure of attention to liberal movements among the churches, and published two or three minor theological works before his death in 1837,²⁵ his deeper interest was in Christian philanthropies and reforms, and he eventually gave himself fully to the peace movement, organized the Massachusetts Peace Society, transferred his editorial activity from the *Christian Disciple* to the *Friend of Peace*, and was named "the Apostle of Peace."

Besides these definite trends, there were several premonitory signs of a more general character. Among the common people at large there were in various quarters vague stirrings of religious unrest, and of discontent with the prevailing religion. In New England the new preachers of Universalism, brought over from England, found a hear-

²³ Cf. Noah Worcester, *Bible News of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit* (Concord, 1810); *General Repository and Review* (1812), i, 345-363.

²⁴ Cf. Noah Worcester, *A Respectful Address to the Trinitarian Clergy, relating to their Manner of Treating their Opponents* (Boston, 1812); Stephen Farley, *Letters addressed to the Rev. Noah Worcester* (Windsor, 1813); (Thomas Andros), *Bible News . . . not correct* (Boston, 1813); Ethan Smith, *A Treatise on the Character of Jesus Christ, and of the Trinity in Unity of the Godhead*, etc. (Boston, 1814); Worcester, *An Appeal to the Candid*, 3 nos. (Boston, 1814). Cf. also several writings by his brother Thomas.

²⁵ Cf. Henry Ware, Jr., *Memoirs of the Rev. Noah Worcester* (Boston, 1844); *id.*, 'Memoir of Noah Worcester,' in Ware, *Unitarian Biography*, i, 1-98; Sprague, *Unitarian Pulpit*, pp. 191-199; Eliot, *Heralds*, ii, 31-39.

ing from many souls that would fain have the inspirations of religion, but recoiled from orthodoxy with its insistence on the doctrine of eternal punishment. Hence the early Universalists' revolt from Calvin, though they were not as yet troubled about the doctrines of God and Christ. Among members of the Society of Friends there arose a demand for greater liberty of belief, which led to separation of the Hicksites from the Orthodox. Early in the century, after a great revival in the Western States, the Presbyterian General Assembly had deposed between forty and fifty preachers for denying the Trinity and asserting the Unity of God.²⁸ In the border States between North and South there grew up a widespread revolt against all creeds and confessions, embodied in the rigid doctrinal system of the prevailing Presbyterianism. The demand was instead for a return to the Bible itself for religious teaching, and to make obedience to Christ's teaching the sole test, and they adopted no distinctive name, but called themselves only Christians. A Unitarian minister returning from extensive travels in the western country reported that these simple Christians numbered about 1,000 congregations and published their own newspaper. They resembled the Methodists, but rejected the Trinity. A similar group known as Christians spread through New England. Eventually these scattered companies grew together under the name of Christians. All these were indications that the religious world was on the edge of a new realignment, of which the Unitarian controversy was but one outstanding example.

Cleavage between the two wings of Congregationalism had begun, as we have seen, even a little before the turn of the century. We have already noted the cases of churches divided at Worcester, Taunton, Plymouth, and Fitchburg. Instances tended to multiply. In 1798 at Brimfield, Mass., a church Council refused to install a minister because he was not sound as to the Divinity of Christ; heated criticism followed, and a few months later another Council accepted him. In 1805 the Rev. John Sherman, graduate of Yale, who in 1797 had settled at Mansfield, Conn., as strongly orthodox, had grown more liberal, though his preaching had been acceptable to the congregation. One of his deacons, however, complained of him as unsound in the faith, and when his Church would take no action, appealed to the Ministerial Association, which voted to suspend him from membership, and

²⁸ Cf. *General Repository*, iii (1813), 373.

threatened to disfellowship the whole Church if they retained him. To prevent such a catastrophe he withdrew to visit friends on the western frontier, in the little village of Oldenbarnevelt (later Trenton, now Barnevelt), N. Y., having now published his book attacking the Trinity.²⁷ By his preaching here he so much attracted the people that they invited him to become their pastor, and having obtained a due dismissal from the church at Mansfield he accepted the call. Even after he had removed, his old church urged him to return to them, but he wisely declined. He thus became the first minister of what was to be the earliest Unitarian church in the State.²⁸

At Deerfield, a town in the Connecticut valley as yet unsullied by liberalism, Samuel Willard (1776-1859) was called in 1807 to the ministry of the town church. The customary Council from neighboring churches was called to ordain him, but when they had put him under examination as to his beliefs, they decided that he did not believe in the Divinity of Christ, nor in several other articles of accepted Calvinism. They therefore refused to ordain him. The church refused to consent to this dictation by other churches, and called a second Council,

²⁷ *v. supra*, p. 409. John Sherman, *One God in One Person only, and Jesus Christ a Being Distinct from God*, etc. (Worcester, 1805); answered by Daniel Dow, *Familiar Letters to the Rev. John Sherman*, etc. (Hartford, 1806); (Francis A. van der Kemp), *Wreath for the Rev. Daniel Dow on the Publication of his Familiar Letters*, etc. (Utica, 1806); Sherman, *A View of the Ecclesiastical Proceedings in Windham County, Conn.*, etc. (Utica, 1806); M. C. Welch, *Misrepresentations Detected*, etc. (Hartford, 1807). Sprague, *Unitarian Pulpit*, pp. 326-330; Eliot, *Heralds*, II, 59-63; *Monthly Anthology*, III (1806), 249-257, 661; Belsham, *Life of Lindsey*, pp. 256-272.

²⁸ The history of this unique little church deserves more than a passing mention. It was formed in 1803 by about forty gentlemen from diverse sources, and took the name of the United Protestant Religious society of Trenton and, as soon as a minister was secured fifteen of these in 1806 formed and organized the reformed Christian Church on a basis that left members absolute freedom of belief. The chief leader in the movement beside Col. Adam G. Mappa was evidently the Rev. Francis Adriaan van der Kemp (1752-1829), formerly a Mennonite minister at Leiden, who being exiled from Holland for political reasons came to America in 1768 bearing letters to Washington and other notables, and came to Oldenbarnevelt in 1797. He formed friendship with some of the foremost men in the country, and was called "the most learned man in America," and was honored with the Doctor's degree from Harvard in 1820 on the same day with Channing. Even when in Holland he had corresponded with English Unitarians. This church, isolated in a strongly orthodox region, has steadily maintained liberal Christianity, despite violent opposition, for nearly a century and a half. Cf. Charles Graves, *A Century of Village Unitarianism* (Boston, 1904); *id.*, *An Early Unitarian Outpost* (Boston, 1915), and in *Christian Register*, June 24, July 1, 1915; Helen L. Fairchild, ed., *Francis Adriaan van der Kemp, an Autobiography* (New York, 1923); *Autobiography of . . . van der Kemp, Christian Reformer*, N. S. IV (1837), 315-322, 397-402, 487-490.

from the eastern part of the State, which unanimously voted in his favor, and he entered on a long ministry in which he was 'the pioneer of liberal thought in Western Massachusetts,' but was excluded from exchanging pulpits with his neighbors.²⁹ In the following year a more famous case occurred at Dorchester, in the recently formed Second Church, where antagonism between orthodox and liberal became extreme and ended in a separation between them. This church was composed of both elements, which had thus far been at peace with each other, and in 1808 they called the Rev. John Codman (1782-1847) to their pulpit, the Rev Mr. Channing (not yet aligned as a liberal) preaching his ordination sermon. Codman was a pronounced conservative, and to obviate any misunderstanding he announced that, if elected, his ministry would follow the orthodox line; and he presented a very orthodox confession of faith. After a year some dissatisfaction arose over his failure to exchange pulpits with some of the Boston ministers who were liberals, though he was a member of their Association. When some of his members therefore asked that he include these in his list of exchanges, he declined to give any pledge as to what he would do. Dissatisfaction therefore increased, and bitter strife ensued during two years, until at length two successive Councils were called to consider the situation. Though a decision was reached only by the chairman's casting the deciding vote, no peace was secured, and eventually a compromise was made, under which the complainants withdrew from the parish and were repaid the value of the pews they owned. In the summer of 1813 they erected a new meeting-house and formed a new church.³⁰ Codman's refusal to exchange pulpits with liberals was the first step in that 'exclusive policy' which from now on was more and

²⁹ Cf (Mary Willard), *Life of Rev Samuel Willard of Deerfield, Mass* (Boston, 1893), Mary Willard, *Early Unitarian Movement in Western Massachusetts*, *Unitarian Review*, xv (1881), 111, Eliot *Heralds* 11, 90-94, Samuel Willard, *History of the Rise, Progress, and Consummation of the Rupture* etc (Greenfield, 1858), *The Results of Two Ecclesiastical Councils*, etc (Greenfield, 1853), (J Emerson), *An Address to the Christian Public* etc (Greenfield, 1814)

³⁰ Cf *Result of an Ecclesiastical Council Held at Dorchester, Mass, 12 May, 1812; Proceedings of the Second Church and Parish in Dorchester*, etc (Boston, 1813), *Memorial of the Proprietors of the New South Meeting House in Dorchester, to the Ministers of the Boston Association*, etc (Boston, 1803), *Review of the Dorchester Controversy*, *Panoplist*, x (1814), 256-281, 289-307, *Review of Two Pamphlets Published on the Subject of the Ecclesiastical Society in Dorchester* (Boston, 1814), James H Means, *Historical Discourse on the Seventieth Anniversary of the Second Church at Dorchester* (Boston, 1878); William Allen, *Memoir of John Codman* (Boston, 1853).

more followed by the orthodox, and in twenty years had become the well-nigh universal rule.³¹

As early as 1807 Dr. Morse formed a plan to strengthen the orthodox cause by building a large and handsome church in the heart of Boston to serve as a center of orthodox operations. In 1809 the plan was mature, and a church was organized, largely of members of the Old South Church. The three churches in Cambridge, Charlestown and Dorchester cooperated, but the Old South Church and the Federal Street Church declined to be on the Council. The Westminster Shorter Catechism was adopted, and members were liable to be tested by a strictly Calvinistic confession of faith. The new building, known as Park Street Church, was dedicated the following winter, and eventually became a sort of cathedral to the orthodox Congregationalists. Some difficulty was experienced in finding a minister, but at length Professor Edward D. Griffin resigned his chair at Andover and was installed in 1811. He was an eloquent preacher, who presented bald Calvinism without apology, and sermons like his on 'The Use of Real Fire in Hell' brought upon his church the popular title of 'Brimstone Corner.' But his ministry was not a success, the church was burdened with debt, the pews were reported to be half empty,³² and in 1815 he withdrew.

The church at New Bedford divided on a question over the ministry. After the death of the venerable and honored Dr. Samuel West his pulpit remained for some years with irregular and occasional preachers. Finally the Church within the parish grew dissatisfied with the parish committee, and when they were unable to obtain any improvement they voted in 1810 to secede and worship separately — a vote of twelve members of the Church against the whole parish. The remaining minority of the Church reorganized and went on as before, without any public controversy over doctrines; although it is true that the seceders were in fact aggressive and militant Calvinists, but too few to form an effective party.³³

Liberal Christianity did not much disturb the peace of churches in Connecticut at this period, for the ecclesiastical organization there was designed to hold it strictly in check; but in 1811 at Coventry there was

³¹ The last exchange is said to have been by Hosea Hildreth in 1835. Cf. Sprague, *Unitarian Pulpit*, p. xv.

³² Cf. Morse, *Jedediah Morse*, p. 112 f; *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, ii (1829), 227; *Monthly Repository*, vii (1812), 56 f.

³³ Cf. William J. Potter, *The First Congregational Society of New Bedford* (New

a case that attracted considerable attention. The Rev. Abiel Abbot from Massachusetts was settled over the church here in 1795, being presumably orthodox, but after some seven years, though his preaching had given no offence, suspicions of his personal orthodoxy began to be entertained. When personal interviews with him proved unsatisfactory, his Church sought advice of the Association, and this advised bringing him before the Consociation, although Abbot did not acknowledge its authority. This body duly voted to depose him from the ministry for proved heresy as to the Trinity, the Death of Christ, and the Atonement. His parish therefore called a second Council, composed of members from Massachusetts, and he continued preaching as before. The second Council absolved him of heresy, indeed, but in view of all the circumstances recommended that he withdraw, which he did in 1811. Though he had not proclaimed his views from the pulpit, Abbot was undoubtedly an Arian in conviction.⁸⁴

At Sandwich, Mass. separation of another type took place. The Minister, the Rev. Jonathan Burr, had grown strongly Calvinistic, whereupon the parish being dissatisfied dismissed him (1811) by a narrow majority. Upon this, his adherents, including a large majority of the members of the Church, withdrew and built a new meeting-house, leaving a small remnant of the Church with the majority of the parish to continue the old organization.⁸⁵

No two cases of division were alike. In the church at Brooklyn, Conn., the junior pastor, the Rev. Luther Willson, who had been settled in 1813, became convinced after long study of the question that his Calvinistic faith lacked scriptural foundation, and in a series of sermons to his people he declared his conclusions, and avowed his Unitarian belief. Complaint against him was made to the Consociation, which decreed in 1817 that he was no longer pastor of the Church nor to be recognized as a minister; also that the Church, which had long been known as liberal, and had not required of members a profession of belief in the Trinity and the Deity of Christ should, if it retained

⁸⁴ Cf. Abiel Abbot, *A Statement of Proceedings in the First Society in Coventry, Conn.*, etc. (Boston, 1811); (Amos Bassett), *Reply to Mr. Abbot's Statement of Proceedings*, etc. (Hartford, 1812); *Proceedings of the General Association of Connecticut, June, 1812* (Hartford, 1812); *Review of Abbot's Statement*, etc., *General Repository*, i (1812), 145-160; *Panoplist*, viii (1812), 118-142.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Panoplist*, ix (1812-13), 254; xiii (1817), 181-186, 274; *Result of an Ecclesiastical Council held at Sandwich, 24 May, 1817* (Boston, 1817); 9 *Massachusetts Reports*, p. 276 (Boston, 1850), Burr vs. First Church in Sandwich.

him, be cut off from the fellowship of the churches. The Church resisted the decree and sustained their minister, but to prevent a division among his people he resigned. Division occurred nevertheless, the orthodox minority seceded in a Church by themselves, and the remaining parish affiliated with the Unitarians. This is the sole instance in the early history of the Unitarian movement in which Unitarianism gained a firm foothold in Connecticut.³⁶

Only one other case of church division need be mentioned. The First Church in Springfield, after the retirement of the beloved and tolerant Bezaleel Howard³⁷ (who later associated with the Unitarian Church when it was formed), called for his successor a Calvinist, who in 1812 followed Codman's example and refused to exchange pulpits with liberals, and leaned to conservatism to such a degree as to cause much dissatisfaction in the congregation. Unrest continued for some years and as the pastor held his ground, the liberals at length seceded (1819) and formed the Third Congregational Society. They were unanimously recognized as a Church by a Council duly held, but fifteen months later, after they had settled a new pastor, the First Church voted to withdraw fellowship from them, including their former aged pastor.³⁸ These divisions above mentioned are all the important ones³⁹ that took place before the general separation into two denominations, illustrating the conditions and problems that marked this period of suppressed conflict.

Nothing was now lacking to cause open warfare to burst forth but something to define the issue and kindle the flame, and the occasion was unexpectedly furnished from a Unitarian source. The acknowledged spokesman and active leader of the Unitarian movement in England at this time was the Rev. Thomas Belsham,⁴⁰ minister of the Essex Street Chapel which Lindsey had founded a generation before as the first Unitarian church in England. In his leadership of the movement he was particularly concerned that the proper Unity of God and the simple Humanity of Christ be strictly maintained, for

³⁶ Cf. Charles Graves, 'The Inquisition in Connecticut,' *Christian Register*, cii (1923), 989 f, 1014, 1049; Eliot, *Heralds*, II, 168-171; *Connecticut Reports*, v, 405; Whitney vs. Brooklyn, *Unitarianism its Origin and History* (Boston, 1889), pp. 174-176; Luther Willson, *Review of Ecclesiastical Proceedings in Brooklyn* (Worcester, 1818).

³⁷ Cf. Eliot, *Heralds*, II, 264 f.

³⁸ Cf. *Christian Disciple*, III, N. S. (1822), 43-67.

³⁹ For the record may also be mentioned the minor cases of Sharon, Princeton, and Ashby, 1816-17.

⁴⁰ *cf. supra*, pp. 326 ff.

he held that any kind of worship of Christ as divine, to which Arians were more or less given, was sheer idolatry. Hence when in 1791 he organized the first general Unitarian society, Arians were purposely excluded from membership.⁴¹ The term Unitarian in this restricted sense became current in England, and Arianism faded away, and the strict humanity of Christ which Priestley had taught was more and more emphasized and was taught without apology by the Unitarians; whereas in New England the liberals, who were mostly Arians, held the term in a sort of abhorrence, and indignantly denied that they were Unitarians at all, but preferred to be called Liberal, or Rational or Catholic Christians. This distinction must be kept in mind in order to do justice to the controversy here following.

In 1812 Belsham published what he regarded as his principal work, his *Memoirs of Theophilus Lindsey*, in which he devoted one whole chapter to the progress and state of Unitarianism in America. Dr. Morse's son,⁴² who was then studying in England, discovered the book and reported it to his father; but very few copies reached America at first, and these were kept close, so that it was nearly three years before Dr. Morse was able to get hold of a copy. When at last he had read the chapter he found it precisely to his purpose, and he at once made haste to have it reprinted verbatim, adding nothing but a new title, *American Unitarianism*, and a brief explanatory preface, making in all a pamphlet of about 50 pages.⁴³ The pamphlet when published produced a tremendous sensation, and sold five editions within a month. It filled the orthodox with exultation for its apparent confirmation of the long denied charge that the liberals were Unitarians in disguise, and the liberals with mingled grief and anger at being falsely accused of deceit and hypocrisy.

After time had been given for the first impression of the pamphlet to digest, the *Panoplist* published an extended review of it. It was

⁴¹ The Unitarian Book Society *v supra* p. 328

⁴² Mr. S. F. B. Morse, later inventor of the electric telegraph. Cf. Morse, *Jedidiah Morse*,

p. 144

⁴³ He at once sent a presentation copy to ex-President John Adams, thinking perhaps to surprise him by his discovery of a great secret, but Adams in an often quoted letter (cf. *Unitarian Miscellany* 1 (1821) 189-191, *Christian Disciple*, III (1822), 43 f., Sprague, *Jedidiah Morse* p. 125 f.) bore witness that Unitarianism in New England had been held by various well known ministers and numerous laymen familiarly known to him since the middle of the previous century, though despite his calling them Unitarian, their views had not developed farther than Arianism.

ably written,⁴⁴ composed with the skill of a lawyer's argument, not without abundant party spirit, and it was calculated both to rouse the hostility of the orthodox and to force the liberals openly to acknowledge their privately held beliefs and take the consequences. Its aim was to enforce these three points: 1, that the liberal party hold the Unitarian beliefs of Belsham; 2, that they conceal these beliefs while secretly spreading them among the people; and 3, that the two parties, the orthodox and the liberal, ought to separate. After reciting that for nearly a generation a majority of the clergy have been systematically spreading a religion little better than sober Deism, he proceeds to identify it with the Unitarianism of Belsham, to relate the methods employed to propagate it, and to show its incompatibility with the orthodox faith. He describes the progress of Unitarianism in King's Chapel, in Harvard College, and in the case of Sherman in Connecticut, and he supports his case by quoting letters from Priestley for the earlier stages, while for the contemporary situation he reprints a letter to Belsham from William Wells, Jr.,⁴⁵ reporting how widely the liberal faith has quietly spread to day.

A challenge so definitely and publicly made could not be ignored, and the person to answer it was obviously the Rev. William E. Channing of the Federal Street Church who, though but thirty-five years old, was already acknowledged to be leader of the Boston liberals. He did not undertake to answer the *Panoplist* review directly, but put what he had to say in a public letter to the Rev. Samuel C. Thacher, minister of the New South Church, who was his close friend.⁴⁶ The

⁴⁴ The review though unsigned was written by Jeremiah Evarts, Esq., a Yale graduate and a lawyer, whom Dr. Morse had a few years before persuaded to become editor of the *Panoplist*. Cf. E. C. Tracy, *Life of Jeremiah Evarts* (Boston, 1842).

⁴⁵ The Rev. William Wells (1744-1827) was for many years a Dissenting minister at Bromsgrove near Birmingham. He had been a pronounced friend of the American cause during the war, and feeling against him was so strong that after the Birmingham Riots (which he narrowly escaped) he emigrated to America in 1793, and made his home on a farm near Brattleboro, Vermont. Here for many years he preached to a liberal society without salary, declining to be a formal pastor (cf. *Christian Disciple* iv (1816) 300-304). He received the Doctor's degree from Harvard in 1818. His son, William Wells, Jr. (1773-1860), formerly a pupil of Belsham, graduated at Harvard 1796 where he was tutor, was bookseller in Boston until 1830, republished several English Unitarian works, was active in the Unitarian controversy, and later for many years had a classical school for boys at Cambridge, where he died. Cf. Sprague, *Unitarian Pulpit*, pp. 254-261, 449, Eliot, *Heralds*, i, 64-70.

⁴⁶ Channing had supervised his reading in preparation for the ministry. A brilliant scholar, he had written the drastic review of the Constitution of the Andover Seminary

tone of his letter is that of one that is not only deeply grieved but indignant that both he and his liberal brethren in the ministry should have been publicly outraged by brethren in the same ministry by the false charge that the great body of liberal Christians are Unitarians in Belsham's sense of the word; that is, that they believe that Christ was a mere fallible man to whom we owe nothing, and that they are guilty of misleading the people by systematically concealing their real views. Channing proceeded to refute this outrageous charge. He denied as untrue the charge that the predominant religion among the ministers and churches of Boston is Belsham's variety of Unitarianism. This charge had rested on letters of Dr. Freeman and Mr. Wells of Boston, reporting that many of the ministers and laymen of Boston are Unitarian; but *they* had meant by this simply that they do not accept the doctrine of the Trinity, which many of them confessedly reject. Belsham is not acknowledged as leader by any of the American liberals, and their Unitarianism is a very different thing from that of Belsham; for only a small proportion of them believe in the simple humanity of Christ, while the great majority hold exalted views of Christ as more than man — in short, they are Arians.⁴⁷

in the *Monthly Anthology*. When Dr. Kirkland was called to be President of Harvard, Thacher succeeded him at the New South Church. In 1814 he had already preached a notable sermon on The Unity of God, which made his views beyond question. He went into an early decline, and while abroad in search of health he died on the first day of 1816.

⁴⁷ An example of this confounding of two widely differing senses of the term Unitarian is seen in an interesting case of this very period. In 1811 the Rev. John Grundy had preached a sermon at the dedication of his new chapel in Renshaw Street, Liverpool, and in a note added to this when printed he quoted a letter from a recent visitor to Boston telling of the great progress of Unitarianism then going on there. This note attracted the attention of Francis Parkman (1788-1850), a young man from Boston who had been preparing for the ministry under Channing's direction, and before entering active service was spending a year in England. He (taking the word in Belsham's sense as then current in England) wrote Grundy protesting on the basis of intimate acquaintance with the Boston ministers that they were very far from being Unitarian, since they held high and exalted views of Jesus Christ, and would be very unwilling to be confounded with the followers of Dr. Priestley.

For the items in this interesting controversy, cf. *Monthly Repository*, vii (1812), 107 f., 55-58, 199-201, 264 f., 498-501. The subject was revived in the *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, ii (1829), 220-234, to which Parkman anonymously replied in the *Unitarian Advocate* (Boston), iii (1829), 300-308, cf. *Christian Register* April 18, 1829. Returning from England Parkman was ordained minister of the New North Church in 1813 and served it until 1849, distinguished by his faithfulness and generosity to the Unitarian cause.

Proceeding to answer the reviewer's second charge, that the liberal ministers of Boston are engaged in secretly spreading their views, concealing their own and thus misleading the people, Channing replies that their views of the Trinity have *not* been concealed, but are well known to all the clergy; and that the reason why they have not been proclaimed from the pulpit is that controversy on the subject is unprofitable, and has in all ages been mischievous. They therefore preach precisely as if no such doctrine as the Trinity had ever been known. As to the third point, that the orthodox ought to separate themselves from the liberals, this is an invitation to divide the Church of Christ and fill it with a censorious spirit, because of a difference of opinion as to a doctrine that we can not understand nor find in the Scriptures, which has divided the Church for ages. The letter concludes with urging that as Christians we must cherish no ill will toward our enemies, and must remain steadfast in our convictions while keeping open-minded and free from narrow dogmatism.

The *Panoplist* did not at once reply to this letter; but the Rev. Samuel Worcester of Salem undertook of his own accord in a public letter to answer Channing's charges against the reviewer. It will be remembered that in 1797 he had been dismissed from his church at Fitchburg,⁴⁸ and he now doubtless welcomed an occasion to expose the character of the liberal movement. He therefore proceeded to defend the positions of the reviewer. It would serve no useful purpose to retail the steps of the long pamphlet debate which followed.⁴⁹ It soon shifted from the original charge that the Massachusetts liberals were secretly promoting the Unitarianism of Belsham, to a debate about Unitarianism in general; and it ended with Dr. Worcester insisting more strongly than ever that the orthodox can not have fellowship

⁴⁸ *v. supra*, p. 402.

⁴⁹ The consecutive items are these: Thomas Belsham, *American Unitarianism*, reprinted in Boston, 1815; (Jeremiah Evarts), *Review of 'American Unitarianism,' Panoplist*, xi (1815), 241-272; William E. Channing, *Letter to the Rev. Samuel C. Thacher* (Boston, 1815); Samuel Worcester, *Letter to the Rev. William E. Channing* on his Letter to Thacher (*ibid.*); Channing, *Remarks on the Rev. Dr. Worcester's Letters to Mr. Channing* (*ibid.*); Worcester, *Second Letter to the Rev. William E. Channing on the Subject of Unitarianism* (*ibid.*); Channing, *Remarks on the Rev. Dr. Worcester's Second Letter on American Unitarianism* (*ibid.*); Worcester, *Third Letter to the Rev. William E. Channing on the Subject of Unitarianism* (*ibid.*). The above items include (if one would follow the controversy in detail over 500 pages), reviewed at length by (Jeremiah Evarts), 'Review of the Unitarian Controversy,' *Panoplist*, xii (1816), 153-178, 203-234.

with Unitarians, nor regard them as entitled to the Christian name.⁵⁰

No party victory had been won by the long discussion. At the end the two parties were more than ever confirmed in their positions. But the questions involved had been sharpened and clarified, and the threatened breach in the Congregational Church had become inevitable. Ministers and congregations were now forced to choose between the two. The liberal party, which hitherto had preferred to be known merely as Liberal, or Rational, or Catholic Christians, found the unpopular name of Unitarian fixed upon them, accepted and began to use it, and gradually to enlarge its meanings into something broader and richer than its original reference to a single doctrine of controversial theology.

This first controversy in print over Unitarianism ended with Worcester's third letter late in 1815, and the question remained in suspense for more than three years. The arguments were all in on both sides, and the trial was now adjourned to individual churches in which crucial questions might have to be decided. The conservatives, where they could, were urging that long neglected statements of belief be restored to use, or that new creeds be adopted as tests for members; and that candidates for ordination to the ministry be very closely examined as to their soundness in the faith. It was in cases where a new minister was to be chosen that divisions were most likely to arise, whether a candidate from Andover should be taken or one from Harvard; and the smaller number of communicants, who composed the Church, might disagree with the much larger number of tax-payers, who made

⁵⁰ Related to the above controversy though not connected with it was one between the Rev. G. S. White ("Amana"), *Remarks on "American Unitarianism,"* etc. (Boston, 1815), and John Lowell (brother of the Rev. Charles Lowell of the West Church, and an influential member of the Harvard Corporation), *Are you a Christian or a Calvinist?* (Boston, 1815); answered by "Amana," *The Catholic Question at Boston: or, An Attempt to Prove that a Calvinist is a Christian* (Boston, 1815).

A longer controversy of this period, on the question of Creeds, was more or less concurrent with these, though separate from them. In this the Rev. Jacob Norton of Weymouth, still professedly orthodox, published anonymously *Seasonable and Candid Thoughts on Human Creeds or Articles of Faith as Religious Tests*, etc. (Boston, 1813); answered by the Rev. Thomas Andros, who had already replied (1811) to Worcester's *Bible News*. Norton continued the discussion in *Things Set in a Proper Light* (Boston, 1814); and in *A Short and Easy Method*, etc. (Boston, 1815), and *Things as they Are: or, Trinitarianism Developed*, etc., in two parts (Boston, 1815), in which the writer throws off the mask, signs his own name, and shows himself opposed to making acceptance of Covenants a condition of fellowship. A brief digest of all these is given in Gillett, *Unitarian Controversy*, pp. 276-281.

up the parish. Hot words were spoken from pulpits, and bitter feelings were stirred up among the people; and whereas it was an immemorial custom for ministers to exchange with their neighbors as often as once a month, orthodox refusals to exchange with liberals had become increasingly common ever since Codman set the bad example. What the Unitarians most objected to was not the orthodox doctrines, which they were well enough content to leave to the individual to profess or deny as he pleased; but the requiring of subscription to man-made Creeds, and exclusion from Christian fellowship of those that objected to them. Both views found expression in the annual Convention sermons. Thus in that of 1815 the venerable Dr. Charles Stearns of Lincoln pleaded for peace and charity. In that of 1816 Channing avoided controversy and preached on War. In the following year the preacher relapsed into controversy, while in 1818 he emphasized the difficulty of deciding upon articles upon which every one could agree. In 1819 Dr. Abiel Holmes of Cambridge urged mutual tolerance between Church and Parish rather than stubborn insistence on dogmas. But in that year came Channing's sermon at Baltimore, and the day of harmony was past; and the effort to impose a compulsory Creed on the churches was barely escaped. At the Massachusetts Convention in 1823 the attempt was made to get a vote passed that a doctrinal test should determine who should be entitled to Christian fellowship, though by a narrow margin it failed to pass.⁵¹

The controversy thus far, although it had accomplished its first purpose in bringing the Unitarians to light and fastening upon them a distinctive name, so far from weakening them had stimulated them to act in unity in defence of a common cause. Their first move was to ensure an adequate supply of well-trained ministers. To meet the competition of Andover in furnishing candidates for the ministry, the Harvard Corporation, upon the instigation of President Kirkland, began taking steps at the end of 1815 toward increasing the instruction in theology; for hitherto it had been customary for a candidate to seek guidance from a settled minister who supervised his reading and instructed him in the work of his calling or else, while continuing his residence at Cambridge, to read under the guidance of the President and the Hollis Professor. Hence in 1816 was organized a Society for the Promotion of Theological Education, which in due time organized

⁵¹ Cf. *Christian Disciple*, v, N. S. (1823), 237.

the Faculty of Theology, undertook the general direction of the school, raised money and erected a building for it (Divinity Hall), and in 1830 transferred responsibility for it to the University.

The star of Dr. Morse, who had for fifteen years been the head of the opposition to Unitarians, began now rapidly to decline.⁵² The liberal members of his church at Charlestown felt no longer able to continue under his pastorate, withdrew their membership, and formed a Unitarian church in 1816, and after some three years more of growing discontent among his remaining members he felt it necessary in 1819 to resign his office, and withdrew from further active service in the ministry.⁵³ The gradual process of separating the orthodox from the Unitarians in the congregations where they still worshiped together was hastened and the division was made complete and permanent, by two things which now took place and had a decisive effect: an epoch-making doctrinal sermon by Channing, which made a sharp distinction between the two doctrinal systems involved, and a legal decision which settled the property rights of the parties concerned.

Echoes of the controversy in Boston rapidly spread to other sections, and among these the larger cities of the South, Baltimore, Washington, and Charleston, where numerous settlers from New England were prepared to welcome liberal preaching. Baltimore was the largest commercial town in America south of New York, and many leading men of the Boston churches passed through it en route to or from Washington; but when it was desired to have some of the passing Boston ministers preach there, no pulpit could be found open to them.⁵⁴ The local Congregationalists therefore determined to erect a church for themselves. As early as 1816 Dr. Freeman of King's Chapel was announced to preach at Baltimore, and the response was so generous that he preached

⁵² Largely as a consequence of this controversy over the Hollis professorship, Dr. Morse became a very unpopular figure, and his unpopularity was much increased by being linked with a subordinate controversy with Miss Hannah Adams (cousin of President John Adams), over their writings on American history. Cf. Jedidiah Morse, *Appeal to the Public on the Controversy*, etc. (Charlestown, 1814); (John Lowell), *review of the above* (Boston, 1815); (Morse), *Remarks on the Controversy between Doctor Morse and Miss Adams* (Boston); Hannah Adams, *Narrative of the Controversy*, etc. (Boston, 1814).

⁵³ He died in 1826. His distinguished son, the inventor of the electric telegraph, became toward the end of his life a devoted adherent of the radical Unitarian preacher, O. B. Frothingham, in New York. Cf. John W. Chadwick, *William Ellery Channing* (Boston, 1903), p. 128 n.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xv (1820), 14.

two Sundays more. The result was that within six months a society was formed (the First Independent Church of Baltimore), and in barely a year from his first preaching there Freeman returned to dedicate what was at the time the handsomest church in America. Jared Sparks,⁵⁵ at the time a tutor in mathematics at Harvard, was then unanimously called as minister, and ordained May 5, 1819. As this was the first extension of the Unitarian movement beyond Massachusetts into new territory,⁵⁶ it had been determined to make the establishment of this frontier church a distinguished occasion. William Ellery Channing, regarded since Buckminster's death in 1812 as the most eminent preacher of the liberal faith and its leader in Boston, was therefore chosen to be the preacher for the occasion, and eight of the best known New England ministers and several laymen gave their presence. The preacher, who for more than three years had remained silent "under the increasingly narrow and bitter attacks from the orthodox pulpits, felt that the time had come for him to strike back and speak out boldly in support of his faith, and to plead its case against orthodoxy. His theme was that the Scriptures, when reasonably interpreted, teach the doctrines held by Unitarians. It took up the main doctrines on which Unitarians depart from the orthodox, and held them up one by one for searching examination and calm and deliberate attack. It made an eloquent and lofty appeal against a scheme so full of unreason, inhumanity and gloom as Calvinism seemed to him to be, and impeached the orthodoxy of the day before the bar of the popular reason and conscience.

The sermon, which lasted an hour and a half, made a profound impression at the time, and has probably had a wider, deeper and more lasting influence than any other ever preached in America. As the first elaborate statement and defence of their faith in this country, it furnished the Unitarians a sort of platform to which they could rally, and laid down their system of defence and attack for the controversies that were to follow, and since it brought forward as their champion the most distinguished, most eloquent and most honored minister in Boston, it gave them courage in their hesitating convictions and con-

⁵⁵ Cf. Herbert B. Adams, *Life and Writings of Jared Sparks* (Boston, 1893), Eliot, *Heralds* 11, 203-205.

⁵⁶ The church at Philadelphia was of English origin, and that at Oldenbarnevelt originated independently of Massachusetts.

⁵⁷ Save for one or two unsigned articles in the *Christian Disciple*.

fidence in the future of their cause. It did more than anything else to make a hitherto vague liberalism cohere into a movement of clear convictions and a definitely realized mission. This sermon, which went through eight editions in four months, was followed by preaching from the visiting ministers, and so the new pastorate was auspiciously begun.

Only a few months after his ordination Mr. Sparks was asked to assist at another ordination farther south, where Samuel Gilman was to be ordained at a new church at Charleston,⁵⁸ where he was to have a notable ministry of nearly forty years. He also preached to large congregations at Raleigh, N. C., en route to and from Charleston; and returning to Baltimore he soon found himself bound to repel various attacks from the established clergy. The first important discussion was carried on in a friendly spirit through the press with the Rev. William E. Wyatt of St. Paul's Parish, and his contribution to it was later published in a book that was widely read.⁵⁹ He soon felt the need of wider means of publication, and besides organizing the Unitarian Society for the Distribution of Books, he began publishing monthly in 1821 *The Unitarian Miscellany*, the first avowedly Unitarian periodical in America. It continued for six volumes, the first three of which were edited and largely written by Sparks himself. Its circulation was large, and its influence in defending and promoting the Unitarian cause was notable. Much interest was aroused by a series of letters in it addressed to Professor Samuel Miller of Princeton Theological Seminary, who in an ordination sermon at Baltimore in 1820 had made a gross attack upon Unitarianism, charging that its doctrines notoriously led to immoral living.⁶⁰ These letters were later published in book form. During the heated summer season while visiting resorts in the mountains he

⁵⁸ The Rev. Anthony Forster, pioneer of Unitarianism in the South, had been ordained as a Presbyterian and was settled over a Presbyterian church at Charleston; but he outgrew his orthodox faith and withdrew from the Presbytery. His congregation also separated from the Presbyterians and organized as the Second Independent Church of Charleston (1816). But his health failed, and he died early in 1820. Meantime Gilman who had supplied his pulpit, succeeded him, and the church affiliated with the Unitarians. Cf. 'Memoir of Forster' by John Bartlett in Ware, *Unitarian Biography*, ii, 379-408; *Unitarian Miscellany*, i (1821), 249-262; *Christian Disciple*, iii, N. S. (1822), 280-299. For Gilman, cf. Eliot, *Heralds*, ii, 274-280.

⁵⁹ Cf. Jared Sparks, *Letters on the Ministry, Ritual and Doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Baltimore, 1820); *Christian Disciple*, ii, N. S. (1820), 287-330.

⁶⁰ Cf. Samuel Miller, *Letters on Unitarianism* (Trenton, 1821); Sparks, *Inquiry into the Comparative Moral Tendency of Trinitarian and Unitarian Doctrines, in a Series of Letters to the Rev. Dr. Miller of Princeton* (Boston, 1823).

had opportunity to serve his cause as he made the acquaintance of many men prominent in public life, and these became his friends at Washington where in 1821 he was chosen Chaplain of the House of Representatives in face of strenuous opposition from the orthodox. He preached every other Sunday in the Hall of Representatives, and on the alternate Sundays to a little Unitarian congregation that had been gathered the previous year and had just organized as a church, which was to dedicate its place of worship a year later.⁶¹ With the beginning of 1823 Sparks was enabled to resign the editorship of the *Unitarian Miscellany* to capable hands; but at the same time he undertook as editor the quarterly publication of a *Collection of Essays and Tracts in Theology*, which ran to six volumes. It was a careful selection of papers by writers of various schools, and was designed to promote religious freedom and rational piety by showing that enlightened Christians of all countries substantially agree upon what is important in religion. This was Sparks's last contribution to religious literature, for with health impaired he resigned his pastorate in the early summer of 1823, and gave the rest of his life to teaching and historical writing.

While at Baltimore Sparks came into remote contact with an interesting development of Unitarianism in what was then a pioneer land. He discovered that in five of the new States west of the mountains there was, under the leadership of the Rev. Barton W. Stone (1772-1844, formerly a Presbyterian minister) a rapidly growing connection called simply Christians, organized in a Conference, practicing immersion

⁶¹ The Rev. John Wright, brother of Richard Wright (*v. supra*, pp. 334 f), victim of intolerance and persecution at Liverpool, emigrated in 1817 and settled at Georgetown near Washington, where he found a few English Unitarians lately arrived, who had held several meetings together on Sundays. He at once began to hold public worship and to preach, attracting attention and causing alarm in neighboring towns. They organized as the Unitarian Society of Georgetown, and had 150 members. They were bitterly opposed and maligned, and the Presbyterian church was refused for the funeral of a Unitarian who had been drowned in May 1819. Attacked in print, Wright replied in a series of letters in the *Georgetown National Messenger*, May 18, 1819. Several ministers replied, and the controversy ran for fourteen numbers. See the account in John Wright, *American Unitarian Controversy* (Liverpool, 1819), 114 pp. Cf. *Monthly Repository*, xiv (1819), 703. In 1820 a congregation, doubtless succeeding to this, was gathered in Washington by the Rev. Robert Little, an English Unitarian formerly of Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, and now engaged in business in Washington. A church was organized in 1821; John Quincy Adams, John C. Calhoun, and Judge William Cranch were original members. The church building, dedicated 1822, was designed by Charles Bulfinch, one of the original members, and architect of the National Capitol. Mr. Little died in 1827. Cf. Jennie W. Scudder, *A Century of Unitarianism in the National Capital, 1821-1921* (Boston, 1922).

with open communion, and generally rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity and the dogmas of Calvin.⁶² There were also reports of a similar society in southeastern Virginia with the same name, but distinct from this, and composed mostly of dissenters from the Methodist and Baptist churches, largely Unitarians. Especial interest was felt in the case of the Rev. Augustin Eastin of Paris, Kentucky, who had been a Baptist minister for over a generation when, solely from his study of Scripture, he became convinced that the Trinitarian doctrine is not that of the Bible. He also discovered that Gov. James Garrard, a member of his church, shared his beliefs. As the matter became public, the Association expelled him and his three churches, whereupon he republished Emlyn's *Humble Inquiry*, which appears to have made converts, for soon afterwards there were said to be forty Unitarian Baptist preachers in one Association in northeastern Kentucky, as well as many in other parts of the State.⁶³ These instances would seem to indicate that at the period when Unitarianism was just bursting into bloom in New England the whole southern and western frontier, of four seaboard States and five between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi, was a field white already to harvest. The settlers, having broken old associations, were many of them eager to welcome a simple undogmatic religion, had bold and adventurous preachers only been at hand, ready to share for a generation the exciting hardships and privations of pioneer life. But the Massachusetts churches were not yet organized for missionary activity, nor especially interested in it; indeed, after the successful planting of the church at Baltimore, most of them, instead of feeling the urge to press on into other inviting fields, seem to have been no more than lukewarm about Charleston and Washington, and in another generation the opportunity had passed.

The founding of another important new church is closely connected with that at Baltimore. In December, 1818 the Rev. Henry Ware, Jr., of the Second Church in Boston, when on his way to preach for the new society at Baltimore, preached one Sunday to a small group in New York, and in the following April Channing, en route to preach the ordination sermon at Baltimore, preached to a small company in the house where he lodged, and was invited to preach again on his

⁶² They seem afterwards to have coalesced with the Disciples.

⁶³ Cf. *Unitarian Miscellany*, 1 (1821), 322 f., 289-292, 368-370; II (1822), 261-267, 301-303, III (1822), 207 f., 289-292.

return north, when he preached morning and evening in the hall of the Medical College in Barclay Street to crowded congregations, May 16, 1819. So much interest was shown that a society was soon formed and services were held in a large room at Broadway and Reade Street, with few interruptions, by clergy from Boston, and the following spring construction of a church building was laid in Chambers Street, and it was dedicated in January, 1821 with sermon by Edward Everett.⁶⁴

There was at the time little but bigoted intolerance among the religious forces in the city, the pulpits were outspoken in their hostility to the movement, and its adherents as a crew of heretics, infidels, or atheists,⁶⁵ but the cause prospered, and within six years a Second Church was dedicated at Prince and Mercer Streets, with an epoch making sermon by Channing.

Channing having expressed himself fully in his sermon at Baltimore did not enter into the controversy that inevitably ensued, and for the present he published nothing controversial except one (unsigned) article on 'Objections to Unitarian Christianity considered' (*Christian Disciple*, 1, N S (1819), 436-449, *Works*, one volume edition, pp 401-408), but the Baltimore sermon produced far more than a local effect. It not only echoed throughout the seaboard States from New York south, but in New England it aroused interest from Unitarians and opposition from the orthodox. Of many controversial writings in pamphlets or periodicals, the most important issued from professors in Andover Theological Seminary. The first was from Professor Moses Stuart, who in 1819 published *Letters to the Rev Wm E Channing containing Remarks on his Sermon*, etc (Andover, 1819). He wrote in a temperate spirit, and agreed in the main with Channing's principles in interpreting Scripture, but when he came to the doctrine of the Trinity, he complained that Channing had given an account of it very unlike what the orthodox now hold. He wished, however, that the word *person* had never been introduced into the doctrine, and he freely

⁶⁴ Cf *Christian Examiner*, III (1826), 515-520, *Christian Disciple* II, N S (1820), 224-227, John Ware, *Memoir of the Life of Henry Ware Jr* (Boston 1846) I, 130-137.

⁶⁵ Cf *Christian Disciple*, III, N S (1822), 66-71, II (1821), 402-419, Gardiner Spring, *A Tribute to New England* (New York, 1829), (Henry Dwight Sedgwick), *Remarks on the Charges made against the Religion and Morals of the People of Boston* etc (New York, 1820), Henry D Sewall, *On the Alliance of Unitarianism and Mahometanism* (New York, 1820).

confessed that he did not know what it was supposed to mean; while *the eternal generation of the Son* seemed to him to be a contradiction in terms, conveying no definite meaning. This shocking admission brought upon him sharp criticism from Professor Miller of Princeton, who declared that this doctrine is so closely connected with the doctrine of the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ that the denial of it would soon lead to denial of the Trinity.⁶⁶ Continuing his reply to Channing's sermon Professor Stuart took up in great detail the New Testament passages thought to prove the Deity of Christ; but as the discussion went on, he became more and more clear that the differences between them were not to be reconciled, and came to the judgment that "the simple question between the two parties here must soon be, whether natural or revealed religion is our guide and our hope . . . the sooner matters come to this issue, the better. The parties will then understand each other; and the public will understand the subject of dispute."

Professor Stuart had originally intended to investigate the topics in the rest of Channing's sermon, but the pressure of other duties led him to abandon the plan, and he resigned the rest of his task to his colleague, Professor Leonard Woods. Professor Andrews Norton of Harvard, however, in two articles in the *Christian Disciple* (vol. i, N. S., 1819, pp. 316-333, 370-431) made an extensive reply to Stuart's letters, which was presently reprinted with the title, *A Statement of Reasons for not Believing the Doctrines of Trinitarians concerning the Nature of God and the Person of Christ*, which was much enlarged and reprinted in 1856, and was long considered a standard treatise on Unitarian doctrine.⁶⁷ It was the judgment of a more recent orthodox theologian that 'the total effect of Stuart's reply was in one respect damaging to evangelical theology. . . . The doctrine of the divinity of Christ was rescued so as to become . . . the real basis of its worship and spiritual life. But the doctrine of the Trinity . . . lost its place as the great fundamental doctrine of the system.'⁶⁸

The proper course, however, of the controversy growing out of the

⁶⁶ Cf. Moses Stuart, *Letters on the Eternal Generation of the Son of God, addressed to the Rev. Samuel Miller* (Andover, 1822); Samuel Miller, *Letters on the Eternal Sonship of Christ, addressed to Professor Stuart* (Princeton, 1823).

⁶⁷ Cf. review by George B. Cheever, *Quarterly Christian Spectator*, v (New Haven, 1833), 421-447.

⁶⁸ Frank Hugh Foster, *Genetic History of the New England Theology* (Chicago, 1907), p. 300.

Baltimore sermon was that followed by Professor Woods of Andover and Professor Ware of Harvard, consisting of a series of letters, three on each side, running through the three years, 1820-22, and facetiously known to the outside world as 'the Wood'n Ware Controversy.'⁶⁹ The controversy was conducted with great ability, on a high plane and with a temperate spirit becoming to two Christian scholars. Taking up the criticism where Stuart had dropped it, Dr. Woods defended in order the distinguishing doctrines of Calvinism which he felt had been unjustly attacked by Channing, though he complained that the doctrines that Channing attacked were not those that the orthodox now hold, since the former had been either abandoned by the orthodox, or so softened or modified by them as largely to obviate Channing's objections. In reply Ware insisted on citing from acknowledged orthodox authorities statements of doctrine so clear and definite that they could not be evaded nor explained away as figurative. As the discussion continued, the ground of it became less and less the teaching of Scripture, and more and more the witness of reason, conscience and human experience. When all had been said that could be said, the controversy ended amicably, with no claim of victory or confession or defeat from either party, but with the issues between them sharpened, and the breach between them wider and clearer than ever. The reader of to-day who has the patience to trace all the steps of the controversy can not but be conscious how far the religious interests of this generation have drifted from topics which then seemed so all-absorbing.

At this point it may fairly be said that the Unitarian controversy, in its essential character, had reached its end. It is true that for some ten years more there were still local disputes, doctrinal or other, between Unitarians and Orthodox; but the main points had been so fully canvassed that little remained to say that had not been said already, and the disputes still argued were mostly not about doctrines but about rights to church property, and about exclusion from public offices. It was evident, even if not explicitly acknowledged, that the doctrine

⁶⁹ Cf. Leonard Woods, *Letters to Unitarians* (Andover, 1820); Henry Ware, *Letters addressed to Trinitarians and Calvinists* (Cambridge, 1820); Woods, *Reply to Dr Ware's Letters* (Andover, 1821); Ware, *Answer to Dr. Woods' Reply* (Cambridge, 1822); Woods, *Remarks on Dr Ware's Answer* (Andover, 1822); Ware, *Postscript to the Second Series of Letters* (Cambridge, 1823). Reviews in *Christian Disciple*, II, N. S., 1820, 393, v, 1823, 212-230, 'State of the Calvinistic Controversy'; *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, VI (1833), 686, Andrews Norton, 'Views of Calvinism,' *Christian Disciple*, IV, N. S. (1822), 244-280.

of the Trinity, even if still formally confessed, had ceased to be the centre of the orthodox faith, and was no longer given its old emphasis; and that the outstanding doctrines of Calvinism had received new interpretations which the fathers would have rejected with horror. It was evident no less that the beliefs of the Unitarians had moved on. Channing, indeed, may have remained Arian in his view of Christ to the end of his days; but the well-nigh universal Arianism of the day when the charge of one's being Unitarian was rejected as calumny had been replaced by a view of Christ that, if not yet so baldly human as that of Priestley and Belsham, did not shrink from insisting on his unqualified humanity.⁷⁰

The two wings of the Congregational Church were now spiritually divided, and the division ran through many congregations and even through families; and when question arose as to the ownership of church property, appeal had often to be made to the courts. Now in Massachusetts towns there had long been two religious organizations. The Parish consisted of all the male voters of the town organized to maintain religious worship, which they were taxed to support. The Church was usually a much smaller body within the Parish, of those who had assented to a covenant, or made a confession of faith, or professed a personal experience of religion, and who united as communicants in observing the Lord's Supper. In any case it was a small minority of the whole parish, often composed largely of women; but much deference was shown to the Church as being more devout and zealous in religious affairs, and the usual custom was to allow it to select the minister, and for the Parish to ratify the choice.

Now in 1818 the minister of the First Church in Dedham had resigned, and at a time when differences between orthodox and liberal were at their height a successor had to be chosen; and it happened that

⁷⁰ As an example, Belknap's *Psalms and Hymns* (*v. supra*, p. 397), published in 1795, was purged of the doctrine of the Trinity, but its doctrinal reform went no further. It was consistently Arian in its view of Christ. It was acceptably used in many liberal churches for nearly forty years. But by 1820 it was sharply criticized in one of the liberal periodicals as quite too orthodox. The critic said, "Belknap's collection was excellent for its day; but its day is now past. It can not be denied that it contains much which no considerable part of any Unitarian congregation believes." Cf. *Christian Disciple*, iii, N. S. (1821), 76, 340-353. But long before this, striking further progress in doctrinal reform is seen in Buckminster's *Hymns for Public Worship*, for the church in Brattle Square (Boston, 1808), which is so thoroughly purged of all traces of Calvinistic doctrine that hardly one of the 176 hymns in Part II, is doctrinally objectionable to-day.

the sentiment of the Parish was strongly liberal while that of the Church preferred a conservative. Hence in the vote two thirds of the Parish was for a Cambridge man, Mr. Alvan Lamson (1792-1864),⁷¹ while the Church dissented from the choice by the small vote of fourteen to eighteen. Some dissension occurred, and in the end the dissenting majority of the Church withdrew and formed a new Church, also taking with them the Church's property, the accumulation of many years' gifts, consisting of real estate and other property yielding nearly enough to support the minister. The minority of the Church still remaining in the Parish then reorganized, removed the dissenting Deacon and elected new ones, and sued at law for recovery of the Church's property. It was realized that this was a critical case, for similar situations were bound to arise with many other churches, and the judgment rendered in this case would furnish a precedent for those. The case therefore was stubbornly fought, with very eminent counsel, and was carried up to the Supreme Court. The ultimate question was not whether the Church had the right to the property — there was no question as to that — but whether it was the dissenting majority, or the minority remaining connected with the Parish, that constituted the real Church. The decision handed down in 1820 was that 'where a majority of the members of a Congregational Church separate from a majority of the Parish, the members who remain, though a minority, constitute the Church in such Parish, and retain the rights and property belonging thereto.'⁷² The seceding members therefore forfeited all their rights.

This decision, wholly unexpected by the orthodox, aroused among them an outburst of the bitterest indignation. They charged that the judge, being a Unitarian, had allowed himself to be influenced by sectarian prejudice to favor his own party; and they cried out over the 'plunder' of their churches, and after three generations they had hardly

⁷¹ Cf. Eliot, *Heralds*, II, 206-209. In calling Lamson the Parish took the initiative contrary to all precedent.

⁷² *A Statement of the Proceedings in the First Church at Dedham, respecting the Settlement of a Minister in 1818*, etc., by a Member of the said Church and Parish (Cambridge, 1820), reviewed in *Christian Disciple*, II, N. S. (1820), 257-287.

Cf. 16 *Massachusetts Reports*, 147 and 488, George E. Ellis, 'The Church and the Parish in Massachusetts: Usage and Law,' in *Unitarianism. its Origin and History* (Boston, 1889), pp. 116-254, Enoch Pond, 'The Rights of Congregational Churches in their Connection with Parishes,' in Clark, *Historical Sketch*, pp. 318-335, George E. Ellis, *A Half-century of the Unitarian Controversy* (Boston, 1857), pp. 415-442.

ceased to complain of the legal robbery they had suffered, and they had indeed suffered bitterly. In only a few cases were questions of rights to the church property amicably settled between the parties.⁷³ A careful report prepared by a committee of the Massachusetts General Association in 1836 gives a (probably incomplete) list of 81 'exiled churches,' which upon withdrawal from their parishes surrendered parish and church funds valued at nearly \$366,000 and meeting houses valued at \$243,000 more, while 3,900 members seceded, leaving 1,282 behind. In several cases every member of the Church seceded, in others only one or two aged members were left. After the decision of the Dedham case congregations proceeded to divide one after another as occasions arose until 1840. But there were many instances in which the whole parish became Unitarian without controversy or division, and so insensibly that it is impossible to give the date. In a yet larger number the parish remained orthodox without contest. It was only where there was heated division of sentiment that trouble arose. There were doubtless instances where a liberal majority domineered over an orthodox minority and meant to force them out, but the latter most often seceded for the reason that they were not permitted, though often but a small minority, to impose a minister of their choice upon a large majority of those that attended the church and supported it by their taxes, but to whom he was not acceptable. Nor were the losses all on the orthodox side. There were at least a dozen cases first and last in which it was the liberals that preferred to secede rather than listen to the preaching of doctrines that they believed to be untrue and harmful. Accurate statistics are not to be had, but it is said that when the division was completed the whole number of Congregational churches in Massachusetts was found to be 544, of which 135 were Unitarian, a ratio of approximately one to three. Ninety six churches in all were lost from the Congregational rolls, though in many cases new churches were formed by the seceders.⁷⁴ Out of the twenty five original churches in Massachusetts twenty became Unitarian, in Boston all but the Old South, and in the larger towns of the eastern part of the State, all but three. The sweeping victory also included the ablest ministers, the

⁷³ Cf. *Congregational Quarterly* (July, 1863), v, 229.

⁷⁴ Cf. Clark *Historical Sketch* pp. 270-272, Walker, *Congregational Churches*, p. 343, 'The Exiled Churches of Massachusetts,' *Congregational Quarterly*, July, 1863, 'The Congregational Churches of Massachusetts,' *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, 1 (1868), 57-74.

leaders in public life and the professions, in education and in literature, and the great majority of persons of wealth, culture, and high social position. The next stage in their development, which they entered almost against their will, was to organize and consolidate their forces for extending their borders into the new fields now beckoning them outside New England.

CHAPTER XXII

ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITARIAN MOVEMENT

IT HAD BECOME EVIDENT soon after 1820 that the long impending separation between the two wings in the Congregational Church had in all but name now taken place. Under their loose organization no procedure was provided by which the one wing might excommunicate the other; separations therefore had to come about gradually by mutual withdrawals from relations in which since the very beginnings of the churches they had been united. There were indeed many instances in which the entire congregation without division gravitated to one side or the other, usually following the lead of their minister; but where division of sentiment proved incurable the minority, as the aggrieved party, would withdraw and organize another church. In 81 cases it was the orthodox party that withdrew, though in about a dozen other cases the liberal minority withdrew from a society in which they were outnumbered by the orthodox. Separations ceased by 1840; though by 1825 the Unitarians realized that without their wishing it they were practically a community by themselves. Excluded as they were from their old associations, it now became a serious question whether they should go on as they were, trusting that, as some of them believed, Unitarianism would in a generation irresistibly sweep the whole country; or should instead organize a new denomination by themselves, to hold the liberal ministers and churches together while they defended and extended their common faith. Most of the older leaders were disposed to let their liberal movement take its natural course rather than attempt to direct it and give its forces effective organization; for they had of late seen quite too much of the sectarian spirit, and would fain be done with it. The younger men, however, beginning their ministry full of faith and zeal, felt that if their faith were to spread into new fields, especially in the rapidly settling new West, the work must be planned and directed; for if they left the matter to chance, contented to do nothing, they would simply

be abandoning the field to crude orthodoxy, or to cruder irreligion, leaving liberal religion to die out within a generation.

When the division was complete, the Unitarians numbered some 125 churches — 100 in Massachusetts, mostly within twenty-five miles of Boston, a score elsewhere in New England, and five from New York south. In belief they had with one accord abandoned the doctrine of the Trinity, and were rapidly leaving Arianism behind; but on other doctrinal points there was great diversity, since they were liberal and undogmatic in spirit, though adverse to the dogmas of Calvinism. In fact they valued Unitarianism more for its freedom than for its doctrine. Belonging generally to the conservative class, socially and politically they were disposed to be complacent and self-confident, and felt moved by no eager desire to make converts to their religion or to urge it upon others; but their main emphasis was upon uprightness of moral character, while they were given to philanthropic causes and the general welfare, were devoted to general interests, faithful to civic duties, and generous to cases of private need.

The orthodox on the other hand were for the time stunned by the sweeping victories of their opponents. Despite the fierce attacks upon them in the *Panoplist* in 1815, the Unitarians had made steady gains. Their doughty antagonist, Dr. Morse, had now withdrawn from the field, and the *Panoplist* had been absorbed in a milder publication; Harvard University had escaped from their control; the Supreme Court had denied possession of many of their church properties; and they had as yet no acknowledged champion. How the field looked from the orthodox point of view can best be told in the words of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, speaking of the life of her father, the Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher, who came to Boston in 1826.¹

‘When Dr. Beecher came to Boston, Calvinism or orthodoxy was the despised and persecuted form of faith. It was the dethroned royal family wandering like a permitted mendicant in the city where once it had held court, and Unitarianism reigned in its stead. All the literary men of Massachusetts were Unitarians. All the élite of wealth and fashion crowded Unitarian churches. The judges on the bench were Unitarian, giving decisions by which the peculiar features of Church organization, so carefully ordained by the Pilgrim Fathers, had been nullified. The Church, as con-

¹ Lyman Beecher, *Autobiography*, etc. (New York, 1865), ii, 110. The passage quoted is generally mistakenly assigned to Dr. Beecher himself.

sisting, according to their belief, in regenerate people, had been ignored, and all the power had passed into the hands of the congregation. This power had been used by the majorities to settle ministers of the fashionable and reigning type in many of the towns of Eastern Massachusetts. The dominant majority entered at once into possession of churches and church property, leaving the orthodox minority to go out into school-houses or town halls, and build their churches as best they could.'

But the orthodox reaction had already begun. Andover Seminary was prospering and sending out large classes of young ministers to the churches. Amherst College, founded in 1821, was, after determined opposition, at length chartered by the General Court in 1825, and bid fair to provide higher education untainted by the liberalism of Harvard. The vigorous Calvinist revivalist, Lyman Beecher, was brought from his parish in Western Connecticut to revive the languishing Park Street Church by a series of special services in 1823, and these were followed by a general revival of religion among the orthodox churches of the vicinity, marked by public excitement, and by some secessions of members from Unitarian churches to orthodox. The former were thus challenged to meet the latter with greater energy, and were given the spur needed to organize their forces.

Some elements of organized life indeed already existed and were active among the Unitarians. A Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Piety and Charity had been formed in 1806, when its Secretary, the Rev. William Emerson, began publishing the *Christian Monitor*, containing practical devotional works and reprints of older writings of religious value; and also a series of *Religious Tracts* and other works; and in 1821 the Publishing Fund Society was established to promote the circulation of improving works of religion and morality. But although both these organizations were supported by the liberal element, they were unsectarian and refused to publish controversial matter, and it was not until the middle of the century that they made any special effort to circulate Unitarian literature. Also the *Christian Disciple* set out with the purpose of promoting practical, non-sectarian Christianity, partly perhaps as a protest against the aggressive liberalism of the short-lived *General Repository* which it succeeded in 1813; but it was not vigorous enough to add much strength to the liberal cause, and it somewhat languished. When after six years Dr. Worcester withdrew from it, the Boston ministers took it in hand, enlarged it,

and changed its plan, determined to make it a standard journal of Liberal Christianity appealing to the whole country.² Under the new auspices it was edited by the Rev. Henry Ware, Jr., for six years, until in 1824 it was transformed into the *Christian Examiner* to hold for forty-five years an outstanding place in American religious journalism.³

One modest agency for church extension was in existence before the Congregational churches separated. The Massachusetts Evangelical Missionary Society was founded early in the century and incorporated in 1816 'to furnish the means of Christian knowledge and moral improvement to those . . . who are destitute or poorly provided.' It was not at first sectarian, and it was supported by both conservatives and liberals; but gradually the orthodox ceased to cooperate and it became distinctly Unitarian, and so exists to this day. It made small grants to communities where there was no preaching, assisted them in securing ministers, and thus established young churches in a good many country towns. It still aids feeble churches and ministers in need. Besides this there still remains one relic of the past in the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America. But there was an ardent group that felt that liberal Christians ought to do a great deal more than this to extend their faith. The first tentative step toward organization was therefore taken by ministers that had gathered in Boston for election day to hear the election sermon and attend their anniversaries as the ministers of the State were then accustomed to do. According to arrangement previously made, therefore, the liberal ministers on the evening of May 30, 1820 met in large numbers in Berry Street, in the new vestry of the Federal Street Church.⁴ An address was delivered by Mr. Channing, who spoke of the objects that had brought them together, and of their need as liberal men for mutual

² Cf. John Ware, *Memoir of the Life of Henry Ware, Jr.* (Boston, 1846), i, 127.

³ While the *Monthly Anthology* was founded in 1806 as a distinctly literary journal, religious interests tended to predominate in it, so that its successors, the *Repository*, the *Disciple* and the *Examiner* became the recognized organs of liberal Christianity. But the literary strain also continued, under a separate management. For in 1815 one of the old members of the Anthology Club also began the *North American Review* as a literary periodical, with much the same constituency; for it appealed largely to the Unitarian public, its contributors were very largely Unitarians, and for more than sixty years its editors were Unitarians.

⁴ Cf. *Christian Disciple*, ii, N. S. (1820), 230 f; Charles Lyttle, 'Outline of the History of the Berry Street Ministerial Conference,' *Meadville Theological School Quarterly Bulletin*, xxiv (1930), 3-27.

aid and support. They needed a common bond of union and an opportunity for conference which they had lacked hitherto, to the end of nourishing practical religion and a Christian spirit as well as for promoting their distinctive views.⁵ The address was well received, and the meeting was adjourned until the next evening when, after an animated discussion, simple articles were adopted.⁶ At the next year's meeting the name of the Ministerial Conference in Berry Street (commonly called the Berry Street Conference) was adopted; and as a step toward practical activity it was voted to consider the further extension of religious publications. This earliest and oldest Unitarian organization has maintained an unbroken existence to this day. It meets but once a year, with meetings for ministers only; and as practical activities were soon assumed by another society, its meetings have been given to the discussion of a paper presented by a member. These discussions have often served as a sort of safety-valve for brethren suffering from high pressure, and as they have been carried on with the greatest freedom and marked by the broadest tolerance, they have proved a bond holding together in peace and mutual respect men having the widest variety of opinions.

The growing wish for union in order to give the liberal cause greater strength soon spread from ministers to laymen; for soon after the forming of the Berry Street Conference in 1821 several gentlemen in Boston got together and formed the Publishing Fund Society, thus putting into immediate effect the project that had been tentatively discussed by the Conference. Though refusing to print controversial or sectarian works, within its restricted limits it carried on its useful activities for many years. The older men in especial had an almost morbid aversion to accepting a sectarian name. In 1835 Dr. N. L. Frothingham, already over twenty years settled over the First Church as an acknowledged Unitarian, prided himself on never having used the word Unitarian in his pulpit;⁷ and Dr. Channing even declared as late as 1841 that he was little of a Unitarian.⁸ Very many men and ministers,

⁵ Cf. William Henry Channing, *Life of William Ellery Channing* (Boston, 1880), pp. 218-223.

⁶ Cf. *Christian Disciple*, ii, N. S. (1820), 230; iv (1822), 229.

⁷ Evidently he referred only to his Sunday sermons, for he used the word repeatedly in his Thursday Lecture, May 20, 1824. Cf. Octavius B. Frothingham, *Boston Unitarianism* (Boston, 1890), p. 97; *Christian Examiner*, i (1824), 182 ff.

⁸ Cf. his *Life*, *ut supra*, p. 427.

especially in the strong old churches of Boston, had little or no denominational feeling, and would give no active support to denominational causes.⁹

The growing demand for effective missionary activity, however, was not satisfied, for a very different feeling prevailed among the younger men. A full dozen of the recent graduates of the Harvard Divinity School, where they had sat under the progressive and stimulating teaching of Professor Andrews Norton, were eager, zealous, unafraid, and impatient to be spreading to a broader world the good news of Christianity free from the taint of Calvinism; and it was they that took the lead in the movement to organize the American Unitarian Association. They realized that if they were to do anything to spread their faith beyond its present limits, they must unite and organize for the purpose; whereas if they were to refrain from this, they would be yielding the field to orthodoxy without a struggle, giving way meekly before views that they believed not only untrue but harmful. Their first step was taken in 1824 at a meeting of a club of thirty or forty leading Boston Unitarians called the Anonymous Association, who were interested in promoting the progress of liberal Christianity. Regarding tracts as the best available means of making their faith known they proposed to form an organization for spreading Unitarian principles through the press. A public meeting was called of all interested, 'to confer together on the expediency of appointing an annual meeting for the purpose of union, sympathy and cooperation in the cause of Christian truth and Christian charity.' The meeting was well attended, and the record of proceedings faithfully reflects the state of the Unitarian mind. The first speaker doubted the expediency of what was proposed, and thought that great care ought to be used. Unitarianism should be propagated slowly and silently, and he was convinced that the plan would do more harm than good. Another, speaking in favor, explained that the purpose was not to make proselytes. Dr. Channing gave a cautious approval; but an eminent Judge thought the plan dangerous, unbecoming to liberal Christians, and not beneficial to the community. Everything necessary could be accomplished without any general association. A leading merchant feared Unitarianism would become popular, and when it was in the majority would become intolerant. A prominent

⁹ Cf. Charles Graves, 'Freedom — the Unitarian Tradition,' *Christian Register*, January 6, 1838, pp. 4-7.

minister thought the plan would prove very dangerous by arousing sectarian spirit; another would have no sectarian name used. But the supporters of the motion would not be talked down, and spoke strongly for it. Unitarians had been too timid; had been careless about fostering their own cause; ought to come forward in support of their own views. A great deal had been accomplished by the few that had worked together for the cause. Organization was necessary to maintain the cause, and Unitarianism would gain by using the name. Though discussion continued through the winter, the prevailing sentiment was favorable to the project.¹⁰

At the Berry Street Conference in May, the Rev. Henry Ware, Jr., reported what had been proposed, and invited attendance at an afternoon meeting. None of the opposition seems to have attended, and it was unanimously voted 'that it is expedient to form a new society to be called the American Unitarian Association,' and a committee was appointed to draft a Constitution. The next morning, therefore, May 26, 1825,¹¹ a Constitution was adopted for an association 'to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity'; and an able board of officers was chosen. Dr. Channing, though wishing the Association well, declined the offered Presidency, and Dr. Aaron Bancroft of Worcester was chosen; while Dr. Channing's young colleague, the Rev. Ezra Stiles Gannett, full of fervor, zeal and energy, was chosen Secretary. The chief executive work of the Association fell upon him. The Executive Committee at once held meetings to organize their work and employed an agent to solicit members and funds. Results were slowly won. In the first year only 65 members were obtained in Boston, where interest was lukewarm, and their total number was 891, and subscriptions amounted to \$2,567, support coming mostly from outlying towns. In fact, during the first twenty-five years, only between a third and a half of the Boston churches made any contribution.

It was recognized that at the first most could be done for the cause by publishing and circulating tracts, and of these six were published, and a total of 17,000 copies were issued the first year; but in the second year both membership and contributions increased, and 65,000 tracts

¹⁰ Cf. George Willis Cooke, *Unitarianism in America* (Boston, 1902), pp. 124-142.

¹¹ By the most extraordinary coincidence the British and Foreign Unitarian Association was formed on the very same day, though the coincidence was not discovered until some weeks later.

were issued. A circular letter was issued to all the Unitarian parishes, outlining the work the Association proposed and inviting cooperation in it, but insisting that the purpose was not to build up a sect or emphasize its particular doctrines, but to promote pure practical Christianity. For the sake of practical cooperation in the production and distribution of tracts, the Directors effected an arrangement with the publisher of the *Christian Register*,¹² by which the Association provided one of the ministers as editor. Considerable opposition to the Association was offered from conservative circles, and objections had to be answered and inertia overcome; but in the course of the second year a field appeared which made a strong appeal to Bostonians. The neglected condition of the poor in Boston, estranged from churches, neglected by the clergy, often destitute and exposed to temptation, and sorely in need of friendly interest, called for assistance. Although this was obviously a case for local rather than general attention, the Association, with the aid of funds raised by the ladies of the churches, took it up and employed Dr. Joseph Tuckerman, lately minister of the church at Chelsea, to take charge of the work as minister-at-large to the poor, and the work was continued under the Association's auspices until 1834, when it was assumed by the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches in Boston.¹³ Dr. Tuckerman's work as minister-to-the-poor opened a new era in philanthropy, and he laid down and practiced all the main principles of modern scientific philanthropy. It also extended to England, where the accounts that he gave of his work during his visit in 1833 gave great stimulus to a similar organization of Domestic Missions in the larger cities.¹⁴

Opportunities for missionary work in the field were soon found. During the first summer a number of students in the Divinity School at Cambridge volunteered to spend a part of their vacation in exploring fields in perhaps a dozen Counties in Massachusetts and vicinity, and gathered useful information for future use, and in the very first year an

¹² This paper was founded in 1821 by David Reed (1790-1870), who had studied theology and been licensed to preach, but was never ordained or settled. He felt the need of a weekly newspaper in spirit like the *Christian Disciple*, but more elementary than that. It began simply as broadly Christian, but in the era of controversy it soon had to take sides, and has ever been a staunch organ of the liberal churches. It is to-day the oldest religious newspaper in the country.

¹³ Cf. Eliot, *Heralds*, i, 108-117; *Memoir* by Mary Carpenter, in Ware, *Unitarian Biography*, ii, 136.

¹⁴ Cf. *supra*, p. 354.

appeal for aid came from Northumberland, Penn., where the Rev. James Kay, of late minister to one of the Methodist Unitarian churches in Lancashire, had organized a church and was erecting a meeting-house.¹⁵ Aid was also sought and given for a similar movement that he had just organized at Harrisburg, and for one at Augusta, Ga. But the most important enterprise was the sending of a Messenger to explore the religious situation and the outlook for liberal churches in the new West. Mr. Moses G. Thomas of the Divinity School at Cambridge was sent as a special agent to the Western States. He traveled between four and five thousand miles, half of the way on horseback, and returned after five months in the states between Philadelphia and St. Louis. He brought back enthusiastic reports of many communities in which liberal religion would be eagerly received, especially mentioning the infant churches at Northumberland, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh, and the inviting openings at Marietta, Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis and other promising posts if only good ministers could be had.¹⁶ He also saw much of churches belonging to the Christian Connection to which reference has already been made.¹⁷ They were a loose aggregation of three different and widely separated offshoots, separating at about the beginning of the century from Baptists in New England, Presbyterians in the West, and Methodists in the South, who when they discovered one another tended to coalesce, and were said to have about 500 ministers and toward 1,000 congregations, 50,000 communicants, and some 200,000 adherents. They were organized into over twenty State Conferences and a General Conference, and published

¹⁵ Cf. American Unitarian Association, *First Annual Report*, 1826, pp. 3, 21. It would appear that though meetings were held with some regularity, and the Lord's Supper observed at Northumberland as long as Priestley lived, with him as acting minister, and that though they got so far as to build a house of worship, yet the church to which he looked forward was never actually organized while he lived; and after nearly six years, writing to Belsham in London, he was able only to say, "I do not now despair of an Unitarian society being established in this place in a reasonable time" (March 30, 1800; cf. his *Life*, ed. Rutt, I, ii, 429). The movement apparently languished until 1822, when the Rev. James Kay from Hindley, Lancashire, came, was made Principal of a local academy, and began preaching at regular intervals, and formed a Tract Society. Cf. *Christian Reformer*, ix (1822), 198-200. Mr. Kay reported the formation of a "new society" in 1826, with a two story brick meeting-house 25 or 30 feet square; and an appropriation of \$100 was granted him. In the following summer he went to a new society at Harrisburg. Cf. A. U. A., *Second Report*, 1827, pp. 14, 50.

¹⁶ Cf. A. U. A., *Second Annual Report*, 1827, p. 49.

¹⁷ *v. supra*, p. 426 f. Cf. A. U. A., *Third Annual Report*, 1828, pp. 45-51; *Christian Examiner*, iv (1827), 183-192.

three periodicals. In belief they were anti-trinitarian, accepting only the Bible as authority, but were somewhat more conservative than Unitarians, though disposed to cooperate with them closely. Two Messengers were appointed to attend the United States Christian Conference. Gestures were made looking toward fraternal cooperation, and it was seriously proposed in 1837 that the two bodies should unite in maintaining a new liberal theological school somewhere on the Hudson,¹⁸ though the plan was not carried out until 1844, when a measure of cooperation was realized in the Meadville Theological School.

Encouraged by these reports from the field, the Association proceeded to organize for effective work. Several new openings were reported in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The distribution of tracts was enlarging, many Auxiliary Associations had been formed, and more than fifty agencies established, besides the general depository in Boston. Twenty-one tracts had been printed, and in three years 143,000 had been sold. There was also a growing demand for free distribution, to meet which the Unitarian Book and Tract Society was formed in 1827 to distribute tracts without charge. Well before the Unitarian schism there had been Sunday-schools in a handful of churches that later became Unitarian; but in 1827 the teachers connected with Unitarian parishes in Boston and vicinity organized the Unitarian Sunday-school Society, which for more than twenty-five years did effective work in publishing text-books and Sunday-school papers until the Society was reorganized as a general denominational body in 1854. Other indications of vigorous church life were shown in the building of new churches in Boston and Philadelphia, and a second one in New York, in missionary preaching in Maine, the Connecticut valley and New York State. Promising new periodicals were established, like the *Unitarian Advocate* (Boston, 1828-32), to counteract the *Spirit of the Pilgrims* which Dr. Beecher had set up in 1828 to champion the reviving spirit of orthodoxy; and the *Liberal Preacher* (Keene, 1828-38), which published monthly sermons by the best Unitarian preachers. Great encouragement was aroused by the rapid growth of the Harvard Divinity School, which had doubled in enrollment, had erected the well appointed Divinity Hall in 1826, had within four years settled thirty-five men in the ministry but was unable to meet more than half the applications made for preachers. From overseas came reports of the

¹⁸ Cf. Ware's *Life of Henry Ware, Jr.*, i, 226-228.

progress made by the English Unitarians; of the striking growth of Liberalism at Geneva;¹⁹ of the newly discovered Unitarian Church in Transylvania; and the promising beginning of a Unitarian mission in India.²⁰

While the Unitarian movement was thus showing an upsurge of vitality, the orthodox too were beginning to recover spirit. They had for a time seemed stunned by the rapid advance of the Unitarians, who had been steadily gaining since 1815, and since Dr. Morse's departure they had had no strong and aggressive leader. But Dr. Lyman Beecher of Litchfield, Conn., known as a successful revivalist, had been anxiously watching from afar, and urging the necessity of taking aggressive steps against the advancing Unitarianism,²¹ and when in the spring of 1823 he was requested to come and assist the minister of Park Street Church in promoting a revival, he at once responded. He was much encouraged by the success of his meetings, and when called again to Massachusetts in the autumn to preach an ordination sermon at Worcester, he made his sermon a vigorous statement of the doctrine that he maintained, and of the need of defending it manfully.²² It was sharply reviewed in the *Christian Examiner*, which charged Beecher with softening his statement of Calvinism so much as to make it acceptable to Unitarians. He contended in reply that he was defending not Calvinism but the New England Theology, that he rejected some of Calvin's views, and frankly held a modification of the Calvinism of Edwards's day. He thus put Unitarianism on the defensive. At all events, it paved the way for his later activity in Massachusetts; for when the orthodox two years later dedicated a fine new church in

¹⁹ In 1705 the rule of the Genevese church was repealed which required candidates for ordination to subscribe the Helvetic Confession, and in 1718 Calvin's catechism was superseded by a Reformed Catechism that was substantially the same as the *Geneva Catechism* which was widely accepted by the early English and American churches. Cf. *The Geneva Catechism, for instruction in the Christian Religion: prepared by the Pastors of Geneva, for the use of the Swiss and French Protestant Churches*. Trans. from the French, new ed. 1814 (London, 1818); Jean Jacques Chenevrière, *Causes qui retardent chez les Réformés le Progrès de la Théologie* (Genève, 1819); *Christian Examiner*, iv (1827), 41-61.

²⁰ Cf. especially A. U. A., *Third Annual Report*, 1828, pp. 52, 64.

²¹ Cf. his *Autobiography*, i, 439-449.

²² Cf. Lyman Beecher, *The Faith once delivered to the Saints*. Sermon at Worcester, October 15, 1823, etc. (Boston, 1823); Reviewed in *Christian Examiner*, i (1824), 48-81; reply in *Christian Spectator*, and reprinted in his *Works*, ii, 301-413; Beecher, *Autobiography*, chap. lxxii.

Hanover Street, Boston, he was the inevitable choice for its new minister; and his pastorate there was the beginning of an orthodox aggression which was marked by an almost continuous revival that lasted five years.²³ His meetings were crowded both morning and evening, and some of the Unitarians were moved by the earnestness of his preaching to return to the orthodox faith; and the Unitarians were so much aroused that they began in self-defence to hold evening meetings of their own.²⁴ The fact is that they needed the stimulus of sharp competition to rouse them out of the complacency into which they had fallen when winning in every field, being persuaded that without especial effort on their part their cause was bound to win within a generation.

Early in his Boston ministry, Dr. Beecher, as the now accepted leader of the orthodox cause in eastern Massachusetts, became actively interested in the case of the church at Groton. Here was a case where division had not taken place at once after the Dedham decision, and where the parties existing managed to get on peaceably together so long as no occasion called for decisive action; but in 1826 such an occasion arose. The aged minister of the parish after forty-eight years' service asked for a colleague, and the church consisting of only some thirty voting members out of a parish of three hundred, by a vote of seventeen to eight chose an orthodox candidate; but the parish, which had grown liberal by three to one, refused to concur in the choice. Dissension followed, and when the parish committee provided liberal supplies for the pulpit, the old pastor and his supporters ceased to attend service, set up worship of their own, and began to build a new meeting house. The parish therefore proceeded to choose a new pastor, who was elected by a large majority. The seceders called an *ex parte* Council, which met and published an elaborate "Result," prepared by Dr. Beecher,

²³ To make sure that the church building should never by any possibility fall into unbeliving hands, title to it was held not by the proprietors but by a board of trustees chosen from other orthodox churches. This most uncongregational provision was criticized as an attempt at illegal ecclesiastical tyranny. Cf. John Lowell, *The Recent Attempt to defeat the Constitutional Provisions in Favor of Religious Freedom* etc. (Boston, 1828). Nothing came of it, for the church was destroyed by fire within a few years, and was rebuilt elsewhere. This scheme was credited to Dr. Beecher, but his friends declared that the trust was drawn before he arrived, and was unknown to him. Cf. *Christian Register* February 9, 1828. Several other churches bound themselves by these trust deeds. Cf. Bernard Whitman, *Two Letters to Moses Stuart*, p. 14 f.

²⁴ Beecher, *Autobiography*, II, 76 f.

which attempted to vindicate the paramount right of the church to call its minister. A very bitter newspaper controversy ensued, but reached no practical result.²⁵ As the case lay, the real question was whether the small majority of seventeen voting members out of a church membership of thirty should be permitted to impose upon the great majority of the legal members of a large parish taxed to maintain public worship, a minister who was unsatisfactory to them.

At nearly the same time with the trouble at Groton, trouble arose in another church, in which Dr. Beecher was deeply interested as a consultant if not as an active participant. In the church at Cambridge the venerable Dr. Abiel Holmes (father of Oliver Wendell Holmes) had been settled minister since 1792. In his religious belief he was conservative, while his congregation had for more than a generation sympathized with liberal tendencies; but his preaching was generally practical, and no complaint was made of his theology so long as it was tolerantly held, and pulpit exchanges with the neighboring ministers were impartially made. At the height of the Unitarian controversy, when the 'exclusive policy'²⁶ was being adopted by the orthodox, Dr. Holmes, without giving any notice to his people, joined the orthodox reaction which Dr. Beecher was so vigorously leading, and ceased to exchange with Unitarians, or to admit a Unitarian to his pulpit. For several years no particular complaint was made, but in 1827, when the revival movement at Dr. Beecher's church was moving the neighboring churches, Dr. Holmes, besides admitting only Calvinists to his pulpit, began holding special meetings with Calvinistic

²⁵ (Lyman Beecher), *Rights of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1827); *The Congregational Churches of Massachusetts* (*Spirit of the Pilgrims*, i, 1828, 57-74, 113-140); (John Lowell), *Review of "Rights"* (above), *Christian Examiner*, iv (1827), 124-153; *Vindication of "Rights of the Churches"* (Boston, 1828); *Review of "Vindication," Christian Examiner*, v (1828), 298-316, 478-505; the above all reviewed in *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, ii (1829), 370-403; (Caleb Butler), *Collection of Facts and Documents relating to Ecclesiastical Affairs in Groton, Mass.* (Boston, 1827).

²⁶ When the conservatives had failed in their long efforts to establish Consociations through which Unitarians might be excluded from their pulpits, some of the leading clergy covertly introduced a plan under which the orthodox would refuse to exchange pulpits with Unitarians or otherwise recognize them as Christians, and even used personal pressure when necessary. This was known as the "exclusive policy," and it was an effective means of splitting the church. Cf. *Christian Register*, July 23, 1825, p. 1; James Walker, *The Exclusive System* (Boston, 1827); *Christian Examiner*, i (1824), 384-398, *Remarks on Ministerial Exchanges*; Anon., *Pulpit Exchanges between the Orthodox and Unitarians* (Boston, 1828).

speakers, and appeared to be aiming to convert his congregation to Calvinism, ignoring the convictions of his Unitarian members, there was so much dissatisfaction that members of his parish requested that he resume his former practice and exchange with Unitarians as well as with orthodox. Dr. Holmes felt that it would violate his conscience and create trouble in his congregation if he complied with the request, and for nearly two years, while the liberals who composed three fourths of the parish continued to press their cause, he steadfastly held his ground. At length the parish voted to lay the matter before an Ecclesiastical Council, which advised that the pastorate be dissolved, and Dr. Holmes was accordingly dismissed in 1829. The conservative majority of the church then withdrew, with a minority of the parish, and organized separately.²⁷ These two cases, in addition to that at Dedham already related, were those that excited the most heated controversy as Congregationalists separated from Unitarians. There were, indeed, several minor cases, as at Waltham, where in 1825 every member of the church, including the minister, seceded from the parish and formed a new church and society; and at Brookfield in 1827, where a liberal majority of the parish settled a Unitarian minister, and all the male members of the Church but two withdrew, excommunicated the two and claimed the church property, whereupon the two organized a new Church, and recovered the property by law.²⁸ In many other parishes, however, a happier course was pursued, and without any controversy the Church and parish either remained orthodox or became quietly liberal.

Attacks upon the Unitarians had somewhat changed their ground since the outbreak of the controversy. The question at first debated had been as to the truth or error of the doctrines in question, but that question was largely exhausted in the controversy following the Baltimore sermon. The next criticism concerned the practical effects of the Unitarian faith. Already in 1819 a Presbyterian minister at Baltimore

²⁷ Of the nineteen male members of the church one third were liberal, while of the legal voters of the parish about three fourths were liberal. Cf. *Account of the Controversy in the First Parish in Cambridge 1827-1829* (Boston, 1829), *Controversy between the First Parish in Cambridge and the Rev. Dr. Holmes* (Cambridge, 1829), reviewed in *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, II (1829), 559-571.

²⁸ Cf. *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, V (1832), 402-434, review of the Brookfield Case. The minister referred to was the Rev. George R. Noyes, later distinguished as an Old Testament scholar, and Professor at the Harvard Divinity School.

had stated that Unitarian preachers were most acceptable to the gay, the fashionable, the worldly minded, and even the licentious,²⁹ and another in New York not long after charged that religion and morals had alarmingly declined and vice increased in Boston since the spread of Unitarianism there, and had insinuated that even Unitarian ministers were men of loose morals and little piety.³⁰ These outrageous charges recklessly made, were at once widely accepted, and repeated as unquestioned truth; while more scrupulous critics soberly charged that Unitarianism made its followers less earnest in their religion, less faithful in its observances, and less strict in their morals. It was declared that they had gradually abandoned one doctrine after another until little of their Christianity now remained, and as they no longer accepted the verbal inspiration of the Bible, they were denounced as infidels. Worst of all, as some of them accepted the doctrine of the Universalists, it was said that they encouraged men to sin since they no longer feared eternal punishment.³¹ Such charges were persistently pressed by the *Spirit of the Pilgrims* which was founded in 1828 to sustain the orthodox cause.

But the charge that the Unitarians most resented, and to which they were most sensitive, was that they were lukewarm in their religion, and indifferent to piety.³² Dr Channing in particular felt called upon to

²⁹ Quoted by Jared Sparks *Inquiry into the Comparative Moral Tendency of Trinitarian and Unitarian Doctrines* etc (Boston, 1823), p. 52

³⁰ Cf Gardner Spring, *A Tribute to New England A Sermon delivered before the New England Society of New York 22 December 1820* (New York, 1821), (Henry Dwight Sedgwick), *Remarks on the Charges made against the Religion and Morals of the People of Boston and its Vicinity 13 the Rev Gardiner Spring D D*, etc (New York, 1820)

³¹ Though at first Trinitarians the Universalists had by this time generally abandoned belief in the Trinity. But the majority of the Unitarians were long reluctant to avow belief in universal salvation, fearing the effect of the belief on morals. Difference in the social origin and the general social status of the two sects long held them apart, and it was yet a generation before the Universalists had outgrown the extreme views of their first leaders and the two were practically at one in doctrine. Cf *Christian Examiner*, vi (1839), 249-262; *Spirit of the Pilgrims* iii (1830), 205-224, reviewing Hosea Ballou, *Recommendation and Reproof of Unitarians* (Boston, 1829)

³² Considerable attention was drawn at this time to the case of the first Treasurer of the American Unitarian Association, who had been a member of Dr Channing's church and a zealous and active Unitarian, but in his two years' service was so much impressed by the greater devotion and religious earnestness of the orthodox as compared with the Unitarians that he concluded that theirs must be the truer system, resigned his office, and transferred his membership. He attributed the difference apparently to the doctrine of

defend the Unitarians against these charges, and when asked to preach at the dedication of the Second Unitarian Church in New York in 1826³³ he chose for his subject, 'Unitarian Christianity most Favorable to Piety.' He supported his theme by taking nine separate doctrines and comparing them in the two systems, and showing the better results of the Unitarian. His thought had matured and grown more definite since his Baltimore sermon, and he hit out strongly, making no attempt to soften his blows as he sought out the vulnerable spots in his antagonist's armor; but his worst offence was that in criticizing the popular theory of the atonement he used an unfortunate comparison and likened the scene on Calvary to a gallows set up at the center of the universe for the public execution of an innocent being. This was never forgiven by the orthodox but the sermon was greeted by the Unitarians with unbounded enthusiasm.³⁴ One reading the sermon in the calmer atmosphere of to-day is not likely to find it more than moderately interesting; but it is significant for showing how far Channing's thought had moved since 1815, and also how far it is from the Unitarianism of a century later.

Tension between the churches now grew greater. To rouse the orthodox feeling and make it more vigorous Dr. Beecher had founded the *Spirit of the Pilgrims* in 1828 to replace the *Panoplist*, while to offset this the Unitarians put forth the *Unitarian Advocate*, and for a decade the quarrel grew more bitter, angry and personal than ever. The Rev. Parsons Cooke of Ware, Mass., now attacked the Unitarians from a new angle, in the annual Fast-Day sermon, April 3, 1828, in which he charged that in the State of Massachusetts, with a population more than three fourths Trinitarian, the Unitarians exercised nine tenths of the political influence. The chief offices of trust and profit had for a long time been held by Unitarians, and they had held the chief appointive offices; and this, he declared, must have come about by sectarian politi-

regeneration. An interesting series of anonymous letters in this connection was given to the public, thus: a) (Lewis Tappan), *Letter from a Gentleman in Boston to a Unitarian Clergyman in that City*. b) (J. P. Blanchard), *Review of A letter*, etc. c) (Henry Ware, Jr.), *Reply of a Unitarian Clergyman*, etc. d) *Remarks on the Letter*, etc. e) *Which Society shall you join, Liberal or Orthodox?* All Boston, 1828.

³³ At Mercer and Prince Streets. Later known as the Church of the Messiah.

³⁴ William Ellery Channing, *Discourse preached at the Dedication of the Second Congregational Unitarian Church, New York, December 7, 1826* (New York, 1827); *Review of the Rev. Dr. Channing's Discourse*, etc. (Boston, 1827).

cal manoeuvring. All the judges but one had been Unitarians, and court decisions had favored their cause. The orthodox had even been excluded from literary and civil privileges and offices in the State. The incorporation of Amherst College as an orthodox institution had been hindered by Unitarians, and Harvard College had been administered in their interest. Their corrupt political influence must be counteracted. The sermon stirred up considerable political activity, and provoked an able reply from the Chief Justice.⁸⁵ Apparently Cooke's sermon had produced the desired effect in rousing the orthodox to take measures for seeking political control and taking it from Unitarian hands, for there seemed to be some signs that they might try to exclude Unitarians from all offices in State and Church.

Evidently having this danger in mind, Channing was roused once more in his memorable Election sermon⁸⁶ on Spiritual Freedom, in which he spoke at some length of the need of having religion held and professed in a liberal spirit, and of the danger that ensues when it becomes intolerant, exclusive and sectarian; and obliquely referring to local conditions he spoke of the power of organized sects, trained by the clergy to utter one voice to over-awe dissent, as a peril as dangerous as the Inquisition. This passage, together with the preface to Channing's *Discourses, Reviews and Miscellanies*, published at almost the same time, angered the orthodox, and led Professor Stuart to address to Channing an indignant letter of protest, in which he declared in the most solemn manner that he knew that Channing's accusations were not true, and challenged him either to support or else to retract them.⁸⁷

Channing made no reply, but the Rev. Bernard Whitman of Waltham, one of the younger ministers, eager for the fray if Channing

⁸⁵ Cf. Parsons Cooke, *Unitarianism an Exclusive System* (Boston, 1828); (Isaac Parker), 'Letter to the Rev. Parsons Cooke,' *Christian Examiner*, iv (1828), 276-283; (Parsons Cooke), *A Reply to a Letter in the Christian Examiner* (Boston, 1829).

⁸⁶ The Massachusetts Election Sermon, preached before the Governor and Council at noon of election day (the last Wednesday in May), was instituted 1634 with the Rev. John Cotton as preacher. The custom was continued with rare exceptions until 1884, when Dr. A. A. Miner was the last preacher. The preacher was chosen by the Governor and Council. The sermon was likely to deal with public questions from the standpoint of religion, and was often a notable utterance.

⁸⁷ William E. Channing, *A Sermon Preached at the Annual Election, May 26, 1830* (Boston, 1830); Moses Stuart, *A Letter to William E. Channing, D.D., on the Subject of Religious Liberty* (Boston, 1830).

was not, furnished a reply in *Two Letters to the Reverend Moses Stuart; on the subject of Religious Liberty* (Boston, 1830). Channing's charges had been made in general terms rather than aimed at particular persons, and Stuart's letter, while also general in its denials, asked for particular instances. Whitman answered with an overwhelming mass of testimony which he had gathered with the assistance of others, filling no less than 165 pages, and giving many instances of orthodox misrepresentation, and of threats and the like made to prevent their ministers from exchanging with Unitarians.³⁸ This time it was Stuart that did not reply, but his part was taken by a brother minister, who was answered by Whitman.³⁹ The further the controversy went on the more it wandered from the original subject into rumors and details, and aggravated the charges of insincerity, unfairness, hypocrisy, and bigotry, and many things were said on both sides that were afterwards regretted. Quarrels became personal and angry. A hasty statement made at an ordination or a dedication on one side would call forth a denial on the other, while page after page would be spent in picking at petty flaws, until peaceable souls grew disgusted. At length the fires of controversy burned out. Moved by revulsion the *Christian Examiner* and the *Christian Register* resolved to cease the tedious strife (though this was taken for a confession of defeat), and at length the controversy ended. A final attempt to undermine Unitarian influence in the University was made in 1830 when the Divinity School was placed under University control, but the attempt was fruitless.⁴⁰

The departure of Dr Beecher in 1832 deprived his party of its leader,⁴¹ and the *Spirit of the Pilgrims* was suspended the next year; but early in

³⁸ Cf. Bernard Whitman, *Letters to Stuart* review in *Christian Examiner* x (1831) 87-129, *Spirit of the Pilgrims* iv (1831), 117-189.

³⁹ Cf. (Enoch Pond), Review of Mr Whitman's Letters to Professor Stuart on Religious Liberty *Spirit of the Pilgrims* iv (1831), 117-180, also separately Whitman *Reply to the Review of Whitman's Letters to Professor Stuart Spirit of the Pilgrims* iv (1831), 326-336, reviewed in *Christian Examiner*, x (1831), 385-394.

⁴⁰ Cf. John Codman *Speech in the Board of Overseers of Harvard College Feb. 5, 1881*, n p., F. C. Gray, *Letter to Governor Lincoln in relation to Harvard University* (Boston, 1831), *Christian Examiner*, x (1831), 129-160, 'Review of Certain Publications relating to Harvard College,' *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, iv (1831), 373-386.

⁴¹ Dr Beecher went to preside over a new Theological Seminary at Cincinnati, where he later had the experience of being himself defendant against a charge of heresy brought by his conservative brethren. Of his seven sons, all ministers, three became well known for their liberal views, and one of his granddaughters became the wife of the Unitarian, Edward Everett Hale.

1834 the Constitution of Massachusetts was amended,⁴² providing for the separation of Church and State, and the voluntary support of churches and thus putting an end to the long controversy

But one other act in the drama remains to be reported. The Rev. George B. Cheever of the Howard Street Church at Salem, being invited to deliver an address at a religious celebration on the fourth of July, 1833,⁴³ took occasion to attack the Unitarians personally, their beliefs and their character. In what the *Christian Examiner* in its review characterized as 'Cheever's vituperations' he attacked Priestley, Channing and other leaders of Unitarianism as cold-blooded infidels, with an abuse 'unparalleled even in the worst days of theological intolerance and bigotry' This closed the controversy

The separation of the denominations was now complete beyond any hope of reconciliation, and the two henceforth went different ways. The twenty years' antagonism had wrought significant changes in both parties. The orthodox, who had begun as supporters of Calvinism, had departed further than they realized from some of Calvin's teachings, and in place of these were now teaching what they called the New England Theology. The Unitarians for their part had also advanced further than they had intended. Most of them had left Arianism behind, and in their view of Christ had gone far towards Priestley and Belsham, while for support of their views they were coming to rely more upon the teachings of reason than upon the letter of Scripture. The orthodox were now soon to be absorbed in a theological controversy in their own ranks as Professors Taylor of New Haven and Tylor of Hartford hotly debated a point of doctrine; while the Unitarians were to be divided, the younger radicals against the older conservatives, as they sought to settle the question as to what were the

⁴² Cf. *Christian Examiner* xii (1833) 337-363, xvi (1834), 138 f.

⁴³ Cf. George B. Cheever, *Some of the Principles according to which this world is managed, contrasted with the Government of God* etc. (Boston, 1833), reviewed in *Christian Examiner* iv (1834) 171-192, Cheever, 'The Course and System of the Unitarians Plainly and Solemnly Surveyed: a Letter to the Conductors of the *Christian Examiner*,' *Spirit of the Pilgrims* vi (1834), 708-734, also separately. Parallel with the above was a controversy running about half a year in the *Salem Gazette* between the Rev. Charles W. Upham and Cheever. Upham's articles were reprinted (1834) under the title, *Salem Controversy*.

Unitarianism had long been dominant at Salem when Cheever settled there as a young man, and found orthodoxy declining. His ministry there was marked by a violent campaign against the Unitarians.

true foundations of their religious life. We shall presently have to follow the Unitarians as they tried to meet the challenge of the new time.

With the air at length cleared of controversy with the orthodox, the outlook for the Unitarians seemed full of promise. Their social position, their leadership in offices of state, their controlling influence in education, their leading part in the world of business and in public affairs in general, were undisputed, and their churches were well attended and well supported. For more than a decade after controversy had died out they were building new churches faster than any other denomination. Their cause in fact was spreading so rapidly of itself that many concluded that any special missionary effort was superfluous, since the movement that had swept over eastern Massachusetts in a generation was bound in a generation or two more to sweep the country. In an atmosphere obviously not too favorable to missionary activity, the young Association was conducted by a group of mostly young men who were eager and aggressive, and determined to do everything possible to extend their cause, though it had for many years but a slender income, and during its first fifteen years its resources fluctuated in the narrow range between \$500 and \$1,500. For it must be remembered that the Association was not one of Unitarian churches as such, but simply one of interested individuals; and that the old parishes were too strongly attached to the Congregational principle of mutual independence for them easily to consent to unite in co-operative effort. For many years some of the oldest and strongest parishes made no contribution as such to the common work, and never formed the Auxiliary Associations which elsewhere proved such effective agents in raising funds to support it.

It has often been thought that this period of the Association's first quarter-century was one of semi-torpor, and the orthodox opposition jubilantly declared that Unitarianism was a dying cause. But the fact is that even in this period its growth, though not rapid, was steady and healthy; and though it became a traditional complaint that the Boston churches in the main did little to advance their cause, it should be recorded that if they were slow to contribute to the Association, they often gave handsomely to separate denominational causes. In 1840, men were sent as scouts into the field in nine States, and reported a large number of places where they were eagerly heard by congrega-

tions that had been alienated by orthodox preachers, but could easily be gathered into permanent churches if only ministers could be provided, but unfortunately barely enough could be found to supply vacant pulpits in the East. Nevertheless promising congregations were gathered in the chief towns on the main traveled routes, such as Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, Detroit and Chicago, which have survived to this day, though in numerous other towns promising ventures faded away through the shifting character of a migrant population seeking homes in a new country. It was not until 1837 that the Association could afford to employ a permanent Secretary who could devote his whole time to the work. The Rev. Charles Briggs, who served in this office for twelve years, carried on his work with great efficiency, and placed the missionary work of the Association on a permanent basis. He paved the way for the incorporation of the Association in 1847, when its Constitution was thoroughly revised and its business procedure was made more efficient. From this time bequests began to be received and a permanent fund to accumulate. The Association had won the sympathy and support of the majority of the societies, a new divinity school had been established at Meadville in 1844 to prepare young men from both the liberal denominations for service in the rapidly growing West; a hundred weak and struggling churches had been aided in their need; more than fifty vigorous churches had been planted in the West and South; and the number of Unitarian churches had grown from 125 when the Association was established to 230 at the middle of the century.⁴⁴

There were no doubt many that felt relieved, now that peace had come, and hoped that they might settle down in quiet to cultivate Christian character and promote a Christian civilization. They had pruned away the dead branches and deformities of the old theology, and had got, or seemed to have got, a good working faith. By temperament generally conservative religiously and socially, they would have been well content to have things go on indefinitely as they were. But sober heads like Channing and the younger Ware faced the unknown new era with forebodings, for they had misgivings for the

⁴⁴ For an interesting contemporary account of the growth of the denomination, cf. an article by John Parkman in *Christian Examiner*, lvi (1854), 397-428; and the History of the Association at its twenty-fifth anniversary in *A. U. A., Twenty-fifth Report* (Boston, 1850), 8-48.

future of their cause as it entered what might prove to be a critical period,⁴⁵ New thoughts were already in the air, which the coming generation could neither escape nor evade. For while the Unitarians had, it is true, effected a reform of some important doctrines of the orthodox system, yet these were but details; while its fundamental principles they had not disturbed. They rested as before on the authority of Scripture as final, and regarded it if anything more strictly than the orthodox, and they believed in the supernatural and in the miracles reported in the New Testament. In short, accepting the philosophical foundation laid by John Locke, who had taught that all our knowledge depends on the evidence of our senses, they considered that the truth of the Christian religion rested on these, and that to question them was to undermine Christianity. But not long after 1830 some inquiring minds had begun to question the soundness of this philosophy, and to wonder whether our religious convictions had not a sounder foundation than the tradition of certain occurrences in the first Christian century. This questioning had its roots, directly or indirectly, in the current German philosophers—Kant, Jacobi, Fichte, Schleiermacher, and less directly in such French thinkers as Cousin and Jouffroy. German indeed was read by but few of the Unitarians of the time, though French by more; but most of them were content to absorb the new thinking through English writers who were deeply influenced by it, such as Coleridge, Carlyle, and Wordsworth, or through reviews of foreign works in the *Christian Examiner*.

The earliest public sign of the influence of this new way of thinking (which presently came to be known as Transcendentalism) was in a review of Hengstenberg's *Christologie des Alten Testaments* by the Rev. George R. Noyes⁴⁶ in the *Christian Examiner* (xvi, 321-364, 1834). As this mostly concerned scholars, it excited no great comment, but within a year or two the adherents of the new tendency became increasingly active. A group known as the Transcendental Club (or Hedge's Club, or the Symposium) met at irregular intervals from 1836 on, at which at dozen or more active spirits discussed philosophical and related subjects; and the new teachings were increasingly expressed in pulpits, lectures and periodicals. Even yet the spreading of

⁴⁵ Cf. Henry Ware, Jr., *Sober Thoughts on the State of the Times* (Boston, 1835); also in his *Works*, ii, 99-144 (Boston, 1846).

⁴⁶ Minister at Brookfield, 1827-34; Professor of Hebrew at Harvard, 1848-68.

Transcendentalism seems not to have been a matter for public concern, for the *Christian Register* and the *Christian Examiner* make hardly any mention of it; but in 1838 came something that set the quietly smoldering fire all ablaze. In the spring of that year the senior students of the Harvard Divinity School invited Ralph Waldo Emerson to address them on the occasion of their graduation.⁴⁷ He had served as minister of the Second Church in Boston for three years, and had then withdrawn from the active ministry to devote himself to literature. He had for several years found the religion of Unitarians cold and formal, and had tried to rouse them to make it a vital personal experience. But he had at length become persuaded that the ministry of the day, looking to persons and events in the past for inspiration instead of listening for the voice of God in their own souls, had lost any real power, and in his address he urged the young preachers to search for God within and to-day rather than in persons of by-gone ages.

Some of the little company heard the address with unfeigned delight. One of these was the Rev. Theodore Parker, young minister of a little church at West Roxbury, who wrote of it, 'It was the noblest, most inspiring strain I ever listened to.' Others were glad to have so earnestly and clearly said in public what they themselves had been vaguely thinking and feeling by themselves; but older heads regarded it with grave suspicion as subtly undermining the very foundations of the Christian religion, and were filled with consternation that young men about to enter the ministry should have been given advice so likely to disrupt their future career. The address must not be allowed to pass without rebuke. Emerson's successor at the Second Church made haste to say in the *Christian Register* that Emerson was not a representative of the denomination nor of many in it, and that he was no longer considered a regular minister.⁴⁸ A reviewer in the *Christian Examiner* called the address 'neither good divinity nor good sense.'⁴⁹ Professor Henry Ware, Jr., his predecessor at the Second Church, catching at some casual expressions not essential to Emerson's main purpose, thought that Emerson subtly meant to deny the personality of God, and felt

⁴⁷ Cf. Emerson, *An Address delivered before the Senior Class in Divinity College, Cambridge, Sunday evening, 15 July, 1838* (Boston, 1838).

⁴⁸ *Christian Register*, Sept. 29, 1838, p. 154.

⁴⁹ *Christian Examiner*, xxv (1837), 266.

bound to preach in the College chapel at the opening of the next term a sermon obviously designed to counteract Emerson's teachings, which he considered made worship impossible.⁵⁰ Unitarian ministers' meetings debated whether Emerson were Christian, pantheist or atheist, and writers in various newspapers attacked him.

A year later Professor Andrews Norton made a more pointed answer in an address to the alumni of the Divinity School, delivered from the same desk from which Emerson had spoken almost exactly a year before.⁵¹ He had been one of the champions of the liberal party in the controversy of twenty years before, and he now girded on his armor afresh, and attacked Emerson's views as 'the latest form of infidelity.' He made an elaborate argument for miracles as the foundation of the Christian religion and declared that one that denies them in effect denies the existence of God and ought to leave the ministry. To all these attacks Emerson, though pained that his intention had been so misunderstood, could on no account be induced to reply; but the Rev. George Ripley, one of the younger ministers of Boston, in a long anonymous letter challenged Norton's main thesis; criticized him for making his own opinion the test of orthodoxy; questioned his right to pronounce who may wear the Christian name or occupy the Christian ministry; and called in question his judgment of foreign philosophers whose thought Emerson was assumed to reflect. Norton rejoined with a pamphlet of *Remarks*, and Ripley with two more *Letters*. Theodore Parker made his contribution in an anonymous letter, and Richard Hildreth in another.⁵² With this the immediate discussion came to an end; but the whole question of the supernatural origin of Christianity was now laid before the public, and ministers were

⁵⁰ Cf. Henry Ware, Jr., *The Personality of the Deity. A Sermon preached in the chapel of the University* (Boston, 1838); *Works*, III, 26-39; review in *Christian Examiner*, xii (1838), 267 f; Ware, *Memoir*, ii, 183-188.

⁵¹ Cf. Andrews Norton, *A Discourse on the Latest Form of Infidelity* (Cambridge, 1839); review by Andrew P. Peabody, *Christian Examiner*, xxvii (1840), 221-225. From this point on for several pages I shall use substantially an account that I have used in an earlier publication and shall not try to improve.

⁵² Cf. (George Ripley) *Letters on The Latest Form of Infidelity* (Boston, 1839); Norton, *Remarks on a Pamphlet entitled 'The Latest Form of Infidelity Examined'* (Cambridge, 1839); Ripley, *A Second Letter to Mr. Andrews Norton*, etc. (Boston, 1840); Ripley, *A Third Letter*, etc. (Boston, 1840); Levi Blodgett (Theodore Parker), *The Previous Question between Mr. Andrews Norton and his Alumni*, etc. (Boston, 1840); (Richard Hildreth), *A Letter to Andrews Norton, on Miracles as the Foundation of Religious Faith* (Boston, 1940).

forced actively or passively to take sides, for the question was bound to be raised whenever a minister was to be chosen. While some diplomatically reserved their opinions or waited for the question to be cleared up, some were bold and aggressive not counting the cost, and some were frozen out of the ministry and were forced to choose another calling.

But the excitement over Emerson's address had barely died down when a new occasion unexpectedly rose. Mr. Charles C. Shackford was to be ordained as minister of the Hawes Place church in South Boston, and Theodore Parker was invited to preach the sermon. Parker was son of a poor farmer, who had had to struggle hard for his education; and after finishing the Divinity School he became minister of a country church at West Roxbury, where he was known as a faithful minister, already remarkable for his immense reading, his wide scholarship, and his extensive knowledge of foreign languages. When he was invited to assist at the ordination, he had been preaching but four years, but he was already known as one of the Transcendentalists, and hence was under some suspicion. He chose as his subject 'The Transient and Permanent in Christianity.' Although he believed in miracles, he insisted that Christianity does not need them to prove it true, but stands on its own merits, and its permanent element is the teaching of Jesus, which is self-evidently true, does not depend on the authority of Jesus, and would still be true even though it were proved that he had never lived at all. It is the forms and doctrines that are transient in Christianity. All this, putting concretely what Emerson had said abstractly, was in itself far enough from the views then held by most Unitarians, but it sounded still worse because he said it in language that seemed sarcastic and even irreverent; so that many of the Unitarians present were deeply shocked and grieved.

Still in spite of all this the matter might have blown over and been forgotten but for the interference of some orthodox ministers who being present took notes of some of Parker's extreme statements, and rushed into print inquiring whether the Unitarian clergy meant to endorse such views, or to regard the preacher as a Christian; and they took it upon themselves to insist that the Unitarians should either disown Parker or else confess sympathy with his views.⁵⁸ Unitarians made

⁵⁸ Cf. *The South Boston Unitarian Ordination* (Boston, 1841), 64 pp., includes both the orthodox attack and the Unitarian replies.

haste to accept the challenge, and to treat Parker almost as a heathen and a publican. Some of his brother ministers refused henceforth to speak to him in the street, to shake hands with him or sit beside him at meetings. They called him unbeliever, infidel, deist, atheist, and tried to get him turned out of his pulpit. Pressure against him was so general that soon there were but five ministers in Boston who would continue their former custom of exchanging pulpits with him, lest they should be thought thus to approve his opinions; and only ministers in the country observed the time-honored custom and continued their friendship.

Some twenty-five of the Boston ministers had long been united in the Boston Association of Congregational Ministers, who used to meet once a month, and to deliver in turn a "Thursday Lecture" in the First Church. Parker was a member of it, and his fellow-members, feeling a certain sense of responsibility for him, were greatly disturbed that he should be known as a member of their Association. They debated whether to expel him outright; but that would be doing precisely what the orthodox had been complained of for doing to them a generation before. They tried to induce him to resign, but he felt that would be to violate a vital question of principle, and he kept his membership. All respected him for his character, and many still held him as a friend, though not approving his views. But he was often aggressive in manner, sarcastic in speech, and vehement in denunciation of those whose views differed from his own; and thus he alienated many of his fellow-ministers who might otherwise have stood by him. Even Channing, who continued to the end to be his friend, doubted whether he should be regarded as a Christian; but so long as his own congregation were satisfied with him, there was no way to expel him from the ministry. Hence most of the ministers simply gave him the cold shoulder, and made him feel unwelcome at their meetings, so that in a year or two they had so far frozen him out that he seldom attended the Association, and had little to do with most of its members. He was never expelled from the ministry, but in the Unitarian Year Book his name was never included in the list of ministers and churches except in the first one in 1846; and in the printed list of members of the Boston Association it never appeared at all.

A few of the ministers, however, though they did not agree with Parker's views, did believe more than the rest in religious freedom,

and acted accordingly. Thus the Rev. John T. Sargent of Suffolk Street chapel⁵⁴ exchanged with Parker in 1844. But his chapel was under the patronage of the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches, and its Executive Committee called him to account for his action so sharply that he felt bound in self-respect to resign his pulpit. The next year James Freeman Clarke also exchanged with Parker, whereupon fifteen of his most influential families emphasized their protest by withdrawing from his church and organizing a short lived one of their own. A group of laymen, seeing that the Boston ministers had now effectually debarred Parker from their pulpits, therefore met and passed a resolution 'that the Rev. Theodore Parker have a chance to be heard in Boston.' They secured a large hall (the Melodeon) for him to preach in. The congregation steadily increased, and organized as the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society (1846), settled Parker as their minister, and removed to the much larger Music Hall. The press mostly used its influence against him, but he had an unparalleled hold on the common people, and was for years the most influential preacher in Boston, crowding Music Hall with its thousands, who had come not to listen to sensations, nor to popular oratory, but to plain, fearless discussion of serious themes. Parker was henceforth a man despised and rejected by most of his own denomination. His thought as it cleared grew more radical but never less religious; but as time went on, beside his Sunday preaching he threw himself more and more into the great social reforms of the day, temperance, prison reform, the elevation of woman, and against capital punishment, war, and slavery. After twelve years of incessant labor, preaching, lecturing, traveling, his health broke. The orthodox exulted and daily offered concerted prayers that the great infidel's voice might be stopped. A period of travel in Europe failed to give him the hoped for relief, and in 1860 he died at Florence, where his grave in the English cemetery remains a shrine for all Unitarians. His influence with them steadily increased, until at length he came to be admired and praised by them as second only to Channing among their prophets.⁵⁵

The discussion among the Unitarians which had at first been cen-

⁵⁴ A chapel built in 1838 for the unchurched poor. It was on what was known as "the neck," near Washington and Dover Streets, but the location is now obliterated.

⁵⁵ The final act of expiation by the denomination was the publication by the American Unitarian Association in 1885 of a selection from his writings, entitled *Views of Religion*, with an introduction by James Freeman Clarke.

tered about Parker, and about the place of miracles in Christian belief, did not end when he had ceased to play an active part in it, nor even after his death; but it broadened its scope into the general question as to what constitutes Christianity, and who should be regarded as Christians. This came to be known as the Radical Controversy, and disturbed the whole denomination for twenty years, until the more urgent matters concerned in the Civil War claimed the attention of all parties. For what Emerson and Parker had spoken publicly, many others were now beginning to think privately; and in time these radicals, as they began to be called, mostly among the younger men, grew more numerous and bolder, and disbelief in miracles and open denial of them increased, even among the clergy. A more liberal view of the Bible began to prevail, being largely stimulated by the labors of German scholars, and introduced to English readers by Parker's Translation of DeWette's *Introduction to the Old Testament* in 1843. Several works from professors at the Divinity School more or less reflected the new learning; while graduates of it were carefully screened by those that thought belief in miracles essential, and some were deterred from the ministry. Yet the new views had spread so widely that the conservatives began to be much alarmed, and the income of the American Unitarian Association seriously fell off, since conservative givers feared that their money might be used for the support of radical preachers. The matter finally broke out into public discussion in 1853, when the officers of the Association took official notice of what could no longer be ignored. Seeking the causes of the denomination's slow progress, they judged that one of the chief ones was the excessive radicalism and irreverence of some (evidently meaning Parker) 'who show no respect to the Scriptures, and deny the supernatural in the history of Christianity and in the life of its founder.' They thought it their duty emphatically to disavow any sympathy with such views, and wished, so far as they might assume to speak for the denomination, to assert their profound belief in the divine origin, authority and sanctions of the religion of Jesus Christ. Since they had no delegated authority to speak in the name of the churches, but only as individuals, they could not propose anything like a creed which should bind all members, but could simply publish for the information of inquirers a declaration of the chief Unitarian views. They therefore set forth an elaborate statement, negative and positive, of the essential beliefs of Unitarians. The President

then offered the following resolution which was briefly discussed and then unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the divine authority of the Gospel, as founded on a special and miraculous interposition of God for the redemption of mankind, is the basis of the action of this Association.⁵⁶

Similar action was taken the same year by the Western Unitarian Conference meeting at St. Louis.

This came as near to the adoption of a creed as it was possible to come, and it doubtless reassured wavering spirits in their faith, but of course it did nothing to conciliate the radicals, nor is there any evidence that it mollified the opposition of the orthodox as it presumably desired to do. In fact, throughout this whole middle period the Unitarians seemed to be creeping cautiously along, careful not to give offence by emphasizing their distinctive doctrines, highly sensitive to orthodox criticism, and pathetically anxious to be acknowledged by the orthodox as really Christian despite incidental differences between them. It was a symptom of their state of mind that in this very year, when it was proposed at the Autumnal Convention at Worcester to erect a monument to Servetus on the three hundredth anniversary of his martyrdom, it was objected that 'it would offend the orthodox.' Indeed, the denomination had for some years been pretty much at a standstill, being apparently aimless, hopeless and powerless. At the annual Autumnal Conventions, variously held each October⁵⁷ from 1842, though the time was bristling with important questions of public interest in which churches ought to have been active, the ministers discussed little but parochial matters, sounded no fresh note, and aroused no inspiration. Already in 1854 James Freeman Clarke spoke of the Unitarians as 'a discouraged denomination.'⁵⁸

The growth of the denomination was indeed slow. Since 1840 a few new churches a year had been added, but so many feeble ones had expired that the gain was barely a score. There were several reasons for this stagnation. The churches were forced to spend much of their strength in repelling the attacks of the orthodox, which were still bit-

⁵⁶ Cf. *A. U. A., Twenty-eighth Report*, 1853.

⁵⁷ For a list of meetings and speakers, cf. *Monthly Journal of the A. U. A.*, v (1864), 49 f.

⁵⁸ At the Berry Street conference. Cf. *Christian Examiner*, lvii (1854), 163.

ter; when they entered new territory religious prejudice hindered their growth; many of the active spirits gave themselves more to furthering moral and social reforms, anti-slavery, temperance and the like than to spreading their own faith, and of course the controversy over radicalism was a serious obstacle to united effort for a common religious cause; for Emerson's philosophy and Parker's theology made more and more converts, and were adopted by some of the ablest and most brilliant of the younger ministers. By 1860 these views were said to be held by twenty-five of them who might have done the denomination great service had they been tolerantly treated. Instead they were opposed by the conservative majority of the older men until some were practically driven from the ministry. Of course they could not put any enthusiasm into building up a denomination which banned free thought and free speech; nor on the other hand would the conservatives give hearty support so long as it was tolerant of radicalism. Thus the number of contributing churches and the amount of missionary contributions dwindled, and at meeting after meeting appeals for aid to new and feeble churches had to be denied because the Association had nothing to give, so that many of these movements were starved to death. Hence church extension languished, and several of the ablest ministers went over to the Episcopal Church.

In spite of the Association's being badly hampered by lack of funds, its work was nevertheless intelligently and efficiently carried on, and despite discouragements there were more signs of life and greater progress than was apparent on the surface. Thus in 1854, when resources and spirit were at their lowest, a fund of many thousand dollars was raised by special effort to spread the faith by publishing books by Unitarian authors in place of the usual tracts; and so much good was apparent from this that contributions were doubled that year. An interest in foreign missions also was kindled at the same time. A generation before some interest had been aroused for missionary work that the English Unitarians were doing in Calcutta,⁵⁹ to which the Americans contributed for a few years. Now, in 1854, it was reported that great opportunities lay open there. The Association therefore appointed the Rev. C. H. A. Dall as their missionary in India. His work prospered, he planted several churches and schools, and he served with great devotion for over thirty-one years until his death

⁵⁹ *v. supra*, pp. 348 ff.

in 1886, though no suitable successor could be found to continue his work. Likewise in the following year (1855) a promising chance seemed to be offered for a mission among the Chippewa Indians in Minnesota,⁶⁰ where work was carried on for an experimental two years.

A large emigration to the West was now setting in, and many New Englanders were seeking to establish new homes there. Many of these were Unitarians, and calls came for aid in founding new churches, and as the funds of the Association increased it became possible to assist them. Thus the first minister and church building in Kansas were Unitarian; and such important points as Detroit, Milwaukee and San Francisco, as well as many smaller places, were occupied. In this period also the Meadville Theological School was established in 1844 in northwestern Pennsylvania, and from that time on supplied a steady stream of young men for pioneer work in the Mississippi basin, while the Western Unitarian Conference, organized in 1852, did much to further missionary work throughout the West. Only in the South, was there little or no growth, on account of slavery; and the churches already established there had so much difficulty in keeping their pulpits supplied that some time before the outbreak of the Civil War several of them had suspended.⁶¹ Yet, taking the whole country together, though many little churches planted in small towns had been short-lived or had not even settled ministers, the number of strong new ones founded at important centers much more than made good the loss; so that the denomination in 1860 was distinctly stronger and healthier than in 1845.

Still when all allowances have been made, it must be admitted that only a hundred out of two hundred and fifty churches were regular contributors to the work of the denomination, while a hundred more, including some of the largest and wealthiest, had never contributed at all. The Secretary of the Association complained that Boston Unitarians saw no reason for diffusing their faith, and it was reported that they did not wish to make Unitarians too common. Many felt that the liberalizing work of the denomination was done and could now better be left to others, or were waiting to see what step was to be taken next.⁶² Yet certain factors tended to hold the denomination together.

⁶⁰ Cf. *Quarterly Journal of the A U A* 11 (Boston, 1855), 326-338, 344-351; 11 (1856), 544 f.

⁶¹ Only the churches at Charleston, S. C., and New Orleans survived after the war.

⁶² Cf. *Monthly Journal of the A U A*, 1 (1860), 350 f.

The Berry Street Conference, oldest of all its organizations, furnished a platform where all parties met together and spoke their minds freely, and thus came to better mutual understanding, the festival dinners where all came together at the time of the annual meetings, and the spirit of good fellowship was developed as they celebrated the year's achievements and nourished their hopes for the future, the annual Autumnal Conventions, where ministers and laymen met together to discuss their common problems and how to meet them, the Meadville Theological School, cooperating with the Western Unitarian Conference with its broader outlook and its invitations to activity — all these strengthened the bonds of union.

For some years before the war broke out the tension of feeling between radicals and conservatives had been relaxing. The fears of the latter had not been realized, while a few of the younger scholars in the ministry, like Dr. Frederick H. Hedge, Dr. William H. Furness and James Freeman Clarke, by their breadth of view, their moderation in speech, and their practical wisdom, led in showing that brethren might respect one another's views even though disagreeing with them. Laymen had never felt much concerned in the controversy anyhow, for it was realized that they were all of the same family after all, and would be ready to rally together to the same cause when one presented itself great enough to dwarf their differences. What was most wanted was for all the elements to be brought together in a spirit of union for the promotion of a common cause which in its greatness took precedence over any differences in belief. Such a cause was now to present itself not in doctrinal theology, or even in works of social reform, but in patriotic service of the nation. Though in war time the church extension work of the Unitarians naturally ceased, yet Unitarian ministers and churches threw themselves with great fervor into the tasks presented by the war. Of late the Autumnal Conventions had been largely attended,⁶³ and a growing enthusiasm was shown, and they emphasized the need of organizing the churches as such for effective work. No meeting was held in 1864; and inasmuch as a new era was to begin in 1865 with the organization of a National Conference, we may well take this as the point where we cross the line into a new and vigorous period of our history.

⁶³ Cf. George Willis Cooke, *Unitarianism in America* (Boston, 1902), pp. 173-186.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH MATURES AND FINDS ITS MISSION

THE YEARS JUST PRECEDING the outbreak of the Civil War may be regarded as marking the lowest period in the history of Unitarianism in America. The funds of the national Association reached their lowest ebb, field work was suspended, and practically no aggressive missionary work was undertaken. Toward the end of 1863 the number of churches with settled ministers was said to be 205, showing a net increase of only four in the past fifteen years. In addition to any other causes affecting church activities, the energies of churches and people were more and more absorbed by the war. Every parish had sent men to the front. The women of every church were occupied in making bandages and scraping lint for the wounded soldiers. At least sixty Unitarian ministers entered the army as chaplains, officers, privates, or members of the Sanitary Commission,¹ and the Association itself sent into some sort of service ten or a dozen men. To supply the special needs of soldiers in the field, and of the wounded or convalescent in hospitals, books and a special series of army tracts were published, and current religious periodicals were supplied. All these services were greatly increased as the war went on, so that at the end the Association had as many as seventy workers in the field.²

The part played in the prosecution of the war by the Unitarians in the United States Sanitary Commission and the Western Sanitary Commission was of such great importance that it deserves to be taken into account in this history; for though these were in no sense Unitarian organizations, yet Unitarians were so active in the leadership and so prominent in the conduct and support of the work that it would be unfair not to mention their connection with the life of the denomination. Early in the first year of the war, Dr. H. W. Bellows, minister of All Souls' Unitarian Church in New York, joined with others in call-

¹ Lists are given in Cooke, *Unitarianism*, p. 176 f.; Eliot, *Heralds*, iii, 132 f.

² Cf. Cooke, *Unitarianism*, pp. 177, 184 f.

ing a meeting in New York to consult how citizens, in addition to what the government might provide, might by volunteer effort contribute to the comfort of those sick or wounded in the war. The result was that after tedious delays the United States Sanitary Commission was organized, with the sanction of the government though independent of it. The idea of it was first suggested by Dr. Bellows, who was its leader throughout, and was its President.³ In its services to the sick and wounded the Commission was of incalculable value all through the war, but its support was from voluntary contributions which, though generous, were promising to be insufficient as expenses rapidly arose, until in October, 1862 the funds were almost exhausted, when an unexpected gift of \$100,000 from citizens of San Francisco saved the Commission from dissolution. Two weeks later the gift was duplicated, and so long as the war lasted abundant funds were furnished from the Pacific Coast, which was too remote to furnish any troops. For this magnificent support, to which California alone contributed more than all the rest of the world put together,⁴ no small credit was due to the personal effort of the Rev. Thomas Starr King, minister of the First Unitarian Church in San Francisco. He had come to California a year before the outbreak of the war, and in its first year he labored indefatigably in lecturing throughout the State to stimulate and strengthen the wavering patriotism; and in 1862 he lectured from end to end of the Pacific Coast for the support of the Sanitary Commission. A similar work was carried on in the Mississippi Valley by the Western Sanitary Commission,⁵ which was organized and largely directed by Dr. William G. Eliot of the First Unitarian Church at St. Louis. Both these organizations throughout the war did a work similar to that of the Red Cross in more recent times, and were largely supported by Unitarians; while the orthodox churches, criticizing these movements for not being sufficiently religious for churches to undertake, preferred to give their support to the Christian Commission, which devoted itself to religious work corresponding to that later carried on by the Young Men's Christian Association. Indeed, when the army hospitals were greatly in want of assistance, the authorities in this Commission de-

³ Cf. Charles J. Stillé, *History of the United States Sanitary Commission* (Philadelphia, 1866), p. 69 f., for a fine characterization of Dr. Bellows and his services to the Commission.

⁴ Total receipts, \$2,055,604.33, California, \$1,233,977.81, cf. Stillé, *op. cit.*, p. 546.

⁵ Cf. Jacob G. Forman, *History of the Western Sanitary Commission* (St. Louis, 1864).

clined to accept helpers offered from Unitarian sources, and took all pains to publish unfriendly comment on any defects discovered in the conduct of the Sanitary Commission.⁶

Though the conduct of the war seriously interfered with the missionary work of the Association, yet the enthusiasm and corporate spirit of the churches were greatly increased. The Autumnal Conventions of 1862 and 1863 were the largest, most enthusiastic and united ever held. The churches had learned the joy of working together for a common cause, and began to appreciate as never before the importance of having an efficient organization instead of a mere aggregation of individual contributors. By tacit agreement no meeting of the Convention was called in 1864, and instead a special meeting of the Association was called in December by the Executive Committee to awaken interest in the work of the Association, and in the need of funds to answer the demands made upon it. The tone of the large meeting showed hope and enthusiasm, and Dr. Bellows, whose work in organizing the Sanitary Commission had been so effective, now urged a like organization of Unitarians in support of liberal religion. A motion to raise \$25,000 during the year was amended to \$100,000 and was unanimously adopted; and a committee of ten was appointed⁷ to call a convention consisting of the pastor and two delegates from each church, to meet in New York.

Before the convention met in April nearly all the money voted had been raised, and many of the churches had contributed for the first time. A few of the extreme churches on either wing refrained from joining in the convention, but the attendance surpassed all expectations. Over two hundred churches were represented by nearly four hundred delegates, including a large number of laymen. It was the first time that the Unitarian churches had been directly represented in a general meeting, and they proceeded with enthusiasm to a thorough organization of the Liberal Church of America. It was well realized by those that had most to do with arranging the preliminaries of the convention that this would probably be a meeting of great importance for the churches concerned. The danger most feared was that the radicals, though not organized as a party, might alienate the conservative ma-

⁶ Cf. *Monthly Journal*, vi (1865), 312.

⁷ Under a resolution by Dr. Bellows, which was therefore the germ of the National Conference. Cf. *Monthly Journal*, vi (1865), 15.

jority, and so split the denomination at the start, and on the other hand that they might feel so much suppressed that they would withdraw in resentment at the treatment they had received. It was a situation calling for skilful parliamentary management and tactful treatment lest the whole plan be wrecked before it had even been tried, and it is evident from the proceedings that there had been previous consultations and a general agreement as to the officers to be chosen and the policies to be adopted, in order that serious divisions might be prevented and that the main purposes of the convention might not fail of being realized.

The convention met in All Souls' Church on April 5, 1865. John A. Andrew, the famous war-governor of Massachusetts, was elected President; and Dr. Bellows was named chairman of the Committee, and was the guiding spirit. The very air was propitious, for it was evident that the Civil War was drawing to a close, and in four days Lee's surrender at Appomattox was to bring the end. The first day was to be spent in preliminary business and in surveying reports of work done or to be done. But at the very outset the specter of the radical appeared, and before any other business could be introduced a prominent layman, as if to warn him against hoping for any share in the convention proceedings, offered a preamble and resolutions designed to commit the convention in advance to what was in effect a conservative creed, accepting Scripture as a revelation, and belief in Christ as our Saviour and a worker of miracles; and in the Resurrection of the dead. Fortunately this resolution was laid on the table, and was not again taken up; and to avoid further danger the length of speeches was closely limited, and it was resolved that in the interest of unity and of the widest cooperation all the resolutions and declarations of the Convention are expressions only of its majority not binding those that object to them. Further consideration of the details of organization was then deferred until the following day, while the remainder of the day and evening was devoted to minor details of business, the missionary work of the denomination, and the subject of education.

The Constitution and the organization of the Conference was the chief matter considered on the second day.⁸ It is apparent from the

⁸ The published official records of the meetings are greatly condensed, and give little idea of what was said in the actual debate; and they have to be supplemented from other contemporary sources, especially from Edward C. Towne, *Unitarian Fellowship and*

proceedings that the committee had met the night before and decided upon the course to be pursued in order to prevent endless discussion of disputable points, which might defeat the main purpose of the convention; for speakers were limited to five minutes, tactics were resorted to that might have been thought high handed, and action upon the preamble, where most opposition was anticipated, was deferred until the articles had been adopted. The Constitution presented by the committee was then, after some debate on one article, adopted, leaving some points unsolved that were to disturb Unitarian counsels for thirty years. In two respects the result was disappointing. It had been Dr. Bellows's great dream that the opportunity had come for organizing a broad Liberal Church of America, which should attract the liberal element in all churches, admitting all that for reasons satisfactory to themselves claim to be Christians.⁹ But this dream evidently found no wide acceptance, and was not realized, for it does not appear in the discussions, and the name adopted was frankly that of a denomination, The National Conference of Unitarian Churches. It had also been hoped by many progressive spirits that the conditions of membership might be such as to admit both conservatives and radicals on equal terms, on a basis of common aims and sympathies without regard to differences of belief. But it soon became evident that the convention was not ripe for this.

The time was ripe, however, for the young Conference to give its attention to matters of practical effort. Leaving to the American Unitarian Association details of ways and means, the Conference at once approved the effort to raise \$100,000 for denominational causes this year; advised a like sum for Antioch College,¹⁰ called attention to the

Liberty: a Letter to Rev Henry W Bellows D D (Cambridge, 1866). Cf *Report of the Convention of Unitarian Churches* April 1865 (Boston, 1866), Stow Persons, *Free Religion, an American Faith* (New Haven, 1947).

⁹ Cf Martha Perry Lowe *Memoir of Charles Lowe* (Boston, 1884), p. 330.

¹⁰ This college had been founded in northwestern Ohio in 1852 by the Christian Connection, on a non sectarian basis. It marked an important step toward religious freedom in American education, for only three or four colleges in the country were quite free from sectarian control. Unitarians had from the start contributed to it generously, the Unitarian Horace Mann had been its first President, 1852-59, and it promised to become in the West as liberal an influence as Harvard had been in New England; but it had fallen into serious financial embarrassment, and was about to close. In consequence of the action of the Unitarian Conference and the aid there promised, the college was saved, and control of it was given to the Unitarians. Cf H W Bellows, "The Claims of Antioch College," *Monthly Journal*, vii (1866), 81-87, 131-141.

need of a denominational organ to be called the *Liberal Christian*, and proposed union with the Universalists.

The stimulating effect of the new Conference was at once felt in the work of the Association. It began to establish churches in college towns, in order to reach students who were likely to become leaders in their own communities. The first of these was at the seat of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, followed the next year by one at the new Cornell University at Ithaca, New York, and eventually by others to the number of twenty in all. Steps were at once taken to revive churches in the South that had been obliged to suspend during the war; and a missionary was sent to California, who planted several churches in growing towns. In the territory of the Western Conference the number of churches had doubled within a year; in less than four years the total number of churches increased thirty per cent; and within a year and a half some forty ministers and churches had been added to the roll. The Association at once attacked its work with a self-confidence hitherto unknown. The desired sum of \$100,000 had been more than raised before the annual meeting of the Association at the end of May;¹¹ many of the parishes had put their churches in repair, paid off their indebtedness, and increased their minister's salary; laymen had taken a more active part in the affairs of the denomination, and the number of contributing churches had more than trebled. The most serious complaint was that of the lack of ministers enough to supply the urgent demands of the many new churches. Nearly a score of missionary preachers visited more than a hundred fields, in eight of which new churches were established, and a large number of promising openings were discovered, provided competent ministers for them could be furnished, and in general a strong missionary spirit pervaded the churches.

But beneath these signs there was a smoldering discontent among the radicals. Though not organized for concerted action, their leaders had come to the convention in 1865 full of hope that when the organization was formed, it would be on such a basis that they might feel at home in it without compromise of conscience. But when the Constitution was presented for adoption, it was seen that the language of the preamble implied that the members were all "disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ," and devoted "to the service of God and the building-up of the

¹¹ Cf. *Monthly Journal*, vi (1865), 294.

kingdom of his Son"; and the limitation of debate gave them no opportunity to express their views. In fact, free discussion of the Constitution had been adroitly stifled, doubtless because the Committee of Business saw that this would call for more time than could be had at this session, or perhaps even more out of fear that factional controversy might rend the Conference at its very outset. Dr. Bellows stated, however, that the whole broad-church basis would be open for discussion at a future convention.

The second meeting of the Conference was held at Syracuse in October, 1866. In the interval radicals and conservatives had freely debated the questions at issue between them in denominational periodicals, pamphlets and sermons. The radicals had plans for revising the Constitution, and one of them offered a substitute for the preamble and first article, omitting the doctrinal terms that had proved objectionable, and asserting the right and duty of freedom of thought, while it sought to base organization for practical work not on uniformity of belief but on unity of spirit. In the proposed amendment there was nothing in itself objectionable, and it was earnestly and very ably debated through most of an afternoon, and in the best spirit. But it was urged that the omission of the words, "disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ" which had once been adopted would be construed as disowning a previously adopted confession of allegiance to Jesus. Hence the amendment was defeated by a vote of two to one, although the name of the Conference was amended to read, 'Unitarian and Independent Churches.'¹²

The result of this refusal to grant the radicals relief of conscience was that the radical delegates returning home resolved to organize an association that would assure them the liberty denied them by the Unitarians. Several meetings of radicals were held privately in Boston within the next few months, at which it was felt that there should be some kind of organization outside of Unitarianism to furnish them religious fellowship, with unrestricted liberty allowed each member. As a result, a public meeting 'to consider the conditions, wants and prospects of Free Religion in America' was held in Boston May 30, 1867, attended by a large crowd, and addressed by distinguished speakers, representing a variety of different views. After the addresses a constitution was adopted and officers were elected, and thus the Free

¹² Cf. *Report of the Second Meeting of the National Conference*, etc. (Boston, 1866), p. 20 f; *Memoir of Charles Lowe*, p. 384 f; Persons, *Free Religion*, p. 40 f.

Religious Association was launched.¹³ Its declared purposes were 'to promote the interests of pure religion, to encourage the scientific study of theology, and to increase fellowship in the spirit.' The new Association was formed with much enthusiasm. About half its original members, beginning with Emerson, had been Unitarian ministers, but not all were radicals, and very few of them withdrew from the denomination. Most preferred to remain in the Conference to continue the agitation for broader freedom, and until the end of the century they had an important influence in broadening religious sympathies. The Free Religious Association had an indefinite membership of perhaps 500, but it did not attempt to organize churches, and only two or three independent ones were formed, nor had it a definite program of action. It was happily characterized as 'a voice without a hand.' But it had significant periodicals,¹⁴ the *Index* (1870-86) and the *Radical* (1886-72), and besides its annual meetings, at which notable addresses were often made, it held Sunday afternoon meetings in Boston for several winters, as well as a few courses of lectures. The Free Religious Association had a gradually diminishing influence for twenty-five or thirty years, but eventually the conditions that gave rise to it had largely ceased to exist, and radical members felt at ease in the old denomination. Annual meetings were still held, however, till well on in the twentieth century.¹⁵

While the question at issue between radicals and conservatives excited warm interest at the meetings of the Conference, it by no means monopolized the attention of the members. In its first year a larger number of churches than ever before had given for denominational causes nearly \$100,000, and for the next year it was voted to raise a like sum. The sum of \$100,000 also voted for Antioch College was nearly made up, and \$150,000 was set as the goal for the coming year. The urgent need of further endowment for the theological schools was emphasized, and \$34,000 for Meadville was pledged on the spot. The need for increasing the salaries of the ministers was also brought to the attention of the churches. The coherence of the denomination was immensely increased by the reported formation of fourteen new local conferences (eventually there were more than thirty), in which it was proposed to

¹³ Cf. Persons, *Free Religion*, chap. iii.

¹⁴ Cf. Clarence L. F. Gohdes, *The Periodicals of American Transcendentalism* (Durham, N. C., 1931), chapter xi.

¹⁵ The last public meeting was held in 1827.

enroll every church in the country. A new Unitarian newspaper, the *Liberal Christian*, supplanting the *Christian Inquirer*, was established in New York. With a view to interesting the large number of those that seldom attended the existing churches, the Rev. George H. Hepworth, a Unitarian preacher with great popular gifts, held a series of religious meetings in Boston that for several years crowded the largest theater; and similar meetings were held in many of the larger cities of the country, although as the novelty wore off they declined and were abandoned. In 1867 the Boston School for the Ministry was organized, with local ministers as teachers, designed to receive students of limited education but of good promise, and to prepare them for work in smaller stations.¹⁶ More than forty ministers were sent into the field for service as missionaries for limited periods. All in all the few years following the organization of the National Conference were a period of vigorous life and activity among the churches, apparently little affected by the disaffection of the radicals.

But while the conservatives, it is true, were well content with the vote at the Syracuse Conference, many soon came to feel that the Conference had been hasty in taking a narrow ground, unjustly excluding some conscientious and deeply religious men; for nearly a hundred of the ministers either had joined the new Free Religious Association or were known to be in sympathy with it. Hence at the next meeting of the Conference in New York in 1868, with a larger attendance than ever before, an amendment calculated to ease the consciences of the radical members of the Conference, was almost unanimously adopted.¹⁷ It was now the conservatives that felt aggrieved, for they had not shifted a step from the position taken by the Association in 1853, and they took this to be practically a surrender of the Conference's allegiance to Christianity, since it yielded to the radicals nearly all that they had asked for. They perceived that radicalism was steadily spreading, and that most of the recent graduates of the divinity schools were inclined to it, while they were more than ever concerned to exclude from

¹⁶ This school began with great enthusiasm, but it lasted but two years. Its financial support was insufficient, and with the removal to New York of Mr. Hepworth, who had inspired it, it faded away.

¹⁷ Article IX. ". . . all the declarations of this Conference, including the Preamble and Constitution, are expressions only of its majority, committing in no degree those who object to them." Adopted 326 to 12. *Report of the Third Meeting of the National Conference* (New York, 1868), p. 87.

the denomination those that did not agree to their conception of Christianity. As the Conference had given the conservatives no satisfaction, they now, under the leadership of Mr Hepworth, determined to seek some action through the American Unitarian Association. They made repeated complaints that the policy of the Association had been too complaisant toward the radicals, and that its funds had been given to support radical ministers; and in the face of such complaints the Association's Secretary at its annual meeting in 1870 made a lengthy statement as to the unpartisan policy that he had pursued¹⁸

His address had general approval, but Mr Hepworth moved that a committee of five be appointed to prepare a statement of faith representing the religious opinions of the Unitarian denomination¹⁹. A long debate ensued, but the motion was heavily defeated. Nevertheless the conservatives sent abroad a circular letter and an *Address to Unitarian Churches* urging them to mass forces at the coming Conference, and intimating that the formation of an Evangelical Unitarian Association might be found advisable as a counter to the Free Religious Association²⁰. It was insisted that unless the Association withheld recognition and assistance from the radicals, it would not deserve the support of the denomination, and they urged churches to cease contributing until the question was settled.

At the National Conference in the autumn of 1870 the strife was renewed. As the subject had for months been earnestly discussed in pulpit and in print, the very large number of delegates present gathered in suppressed excitement. After an earnest debate lasting a day and a half, a substitute amendment was adopted²¹ reaffirming allegiance to Jesus Christ. The majority was decisive, 267 to 33, and the tense feeling of the majority was shown in the fact that the minority were hissed!

¹⁸ Cf. *Forty fifth Anniversary Report*, 1870, pp. 7-22. *Defence of the Action of the A. U. A.* (Boston, 1870).

¹⁹ Cf. *Forty fifth Report* *ut supra*, pp. 23, 22-39.

²⁰ As a contribution to this controversy, cf. various articles in *Monthly Religious Magazine*, xlii and xlii (1870), which largely devoted itself to the conservative interest.

²¹ Substituted for Article IX, *ut supra*, p. 475. The substitute ran: 'reaffirming our allegiance to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we invite to our fellowship all who wish to be followers of Christ.'

Though he had won his point in the amendment he had offered, Hepworth became increasingly dissatisfied with the denomination and more in sympathy with the orthodox, and two years later he left his pulpit and entered the orthodox ministry. Late in life he made overtures for returning to the Unitarian ministry, but was discouraged from doing so.

Thus matters rested for twelve years. But the radical wing steadily grew, though quiescent and little inclined to take part in denominational affairs. The Rev. F. E. Abbot, indeed, heartbroken at the defeat of the amendment he had championed at the Syracuse conference, after two years withdrew from the Unitarian ministry; but while many of the radicals joined the Free Religious Association, few withdrew from the Unitarian Association, though they could hardly feel welcome as members in it.

In 1873, however, fresh attention was called to their position by what was called the Year-book Controversy. The denomination had for some twenty-five years been accustomed to print an annual year book, including in it, for the convenience of those concerned, a list of Unitarian ministers and congregations. The list was not official, and depended solely on the judgment of the compiler. Now in 1873 the President of the Free Religious Association, the Rev. O. B. Frothingham, expressed surprise that his name should have been continued in the Year-book list of ministers, and asked that it be removed, since the editor of the *Christian Register* had invited those 'who have ceased to accept Jesus as pre-eminently their spiritual leader and teacher' to withdraw from the Unitarian body. The Secretary of the Association²² therefore addressed the editor saying that though he was theologically a Unitarian he no longer considered himself a Christian, and he left it to the editor to determine whether his name should be included in the list. The editor decided that it did not belong there; and he also ventured to inquire of several other ministers as to whom there was similar question, whether they wished to have their names included. In the end six names were thus, with the approval of the Directors, dropped from the list.²³ When the case became known it attracted severe criticism, that men of acknowledged Christian character should be excluded from the denomination on such a technical ground. Conservatives approved the action, radicals condemned it; but after nearly ten years' discussion, oral and printed, the names, after having been for one year relegated to a supplementary list, were restored in 1884, with the approval of both Association and Conference.

The finances of the denomination experienced a great revival after

²² The Rev. William J. Potter, minister at New Bedford. Cf. *Index*, v 4 (Jan. 1, 1874).

²³ Cf. *Forty-ninth Anniversary of the A. U. A.* (Boston, 1874), pp. 14-16.

the forming of the National Conference, and in its first year, besides \$175,000 contributed for the general purposes of the Association, over \$210,000 was given for religious, educational and philanthropic purposes. There was a little falling off after the first spurt, especially during the uncertainty over radicalism; but after the overwhelming victory of the conservative element in 1870, enthusiasm revived, more churches contributed than ever before, and in 1871 more than twice as many as in 1870. The attendance at the National Conferences was very large, especially at the meetings held at Saratoga (with three exceptions) from 1874 to 1901. Yet, from extraneous causes, a serious decline began early in the seventies. First of these was the great Chicago fire in 1871, after which, apart from other contributions in relief, the denomination contributed \$60,000 toward rebuilding Robert Collyer's church. This was soon followed by a great fire in the business district of Boston in 1872, which struck a crushing blow at the financial center of the denomination. In that year, when the Association had confidently looked for \$150,000 for use in its church work, it received only \$42,000. Close upon this was the severe panic of 1873, in consequence of which contributions for general purposes fell in 1875 to less than \$26,000. Add to this the fact of the long-continuing post-war depression, which crippled many churches that in the prosperous years following the war incurred debts in building. Nevertheless the Directors of the Association managed its affairs economically and efficiently and maintained its extension better than could have been expected. In its efforts to cultivate fraternal relations with other denominations, however, of which good hopes had been entertained, little headway was made except with the Universalists and the African Methodist Church. The latter were fraternally assisted for several years, and demonstrated the possibility of union in work for good causes in spite of difference in doctrine. The other churches approached received the Unitarian deputies with formal civility, but refrained from any act of cooperation.

In this period the periodicals of the denomination were made more efficient. The *Christian Examiner*, which had held an honorable place as a scholarly journal for over half a century, and had fallen behind the times and lost support, in 1870 gave way to *Old and New*, a more popular monthly, aided by the denomination; and this in turn in 1875 to the *Unitarian Review*; to which the *Monthly Religious Magazine*, which had served since 1844 as less scholarly than the *Christian Examiner* like it gave way; and when this ceased in 1881 it was suc-

ceeded by the *New World*, which ran until 1900, as the last attempt to maintain a magazine with denominational support. The divinity schools also were duly attended to, that the supply of ministers might be assured. The Harvard Divinity School was aided by a fund of \$90,000 in 1879, and the sum of \$50,000 for Meadville was asked for in 1879, though it was not promptly received. Finally the Young Men's Christian Union, which had been founded in 1851 to offset the Young Men's Christian Association with its doctrinal bars, and had lately been revived, in 1879 was given \$100,000.

In its policy of thus strengthening weak strategic points in the denominational structure, instead of multiplying new and feeble infant churches on the frontier, the denomination in 1876 contributed \$30,000 toward building a worthy national Unitarian Church which had long been urgently needed at the national Capital in Washington; in 1879 it contributed a like sum toward erecting a memorial church at Newport in honor of Channing on the centenary of his birth; assumed a mortgage which threatened ruin to the enfeebled church at New Orleans; helped to raise the debt of \$125,000 which was about to ruin the Church of the Messiah in New York; provided with suitable church homes the promising college-town churches at Ann Arbor and Madison; and finally in 1886 erected a handsome building, long and urgently wanted, as Unitarian headquarters in Boston. Besides all these causes at home the American Unitarians faithfully sustained their mission in India; supported important educational projects for both whites and negroes in the South, and carried on welfare work among Indians in the West; and sent aid to the needy Unitarian Church in Hungary. Work in college-town churches was enlarged. A Ministers' Institute was established in 1876 to stimulate the pursuit of scholarly studies among the ministers through biennial meetings alternating with those of the National Conference; and in 1880 was organized a Women's Auxiliary Conference, to furnish the women of the churches avenues of working together for the interests they have in common, which afterwards became the National (later the General) Alliance of Unitarian and other Liberal Christian Women, and has been of incalculable value in uniting the women of the denomination for service to their common cause. One of the most useful branches of its splendidly organized membership is the Post-office Mission, which conducts a wide-spread missionary work through the post office.

It is clear from this long list of activities carried on during a quarter-

century after the formation of the National Conference that the life of the churches was not declining, but was becoming steadily more thoroughly and efficiently organized. But since the income of the Association steadily fell short of the demands of its work, there was a steady encroachment upon its invested funds, so that it became yearly more evident that there must be a change of policy. It should be noted, however, that though contributions for the general purposes of the denomination habitually fell short of the amount asked for as necessary, yet when an appeal was made for a particular case of need, members generally answered it with generous gifts, so that the amount was usually obtained. Meanwhile, ever since the overwhelming conservative victory at the Syracuse Conference, affairs within the denomination had proceeded without open conflict, although continued agitation in private circles showed that the question was still alive, and was bound eventually to come up again. At the Conference in 1874 a cautious attempt at conciliation was made, when a friendly resolution of good will with the Free Religious Association was tabled by a decisive majority, although a resolution of fraternal sympathy with the Congregationalists had just been passed, and a committee appointed to report on revising the Constitution reported that it was unable to make any progress. A resolution approving an invitation to the New Bedford church to join in the meetings of the Conference was also tabled. The conservative element was evidently still firm and implacable. But time exerted its influence. The radicals grew milder, and were discovered to be less dangerous than had been feared, and their opponents somewhat softened their tone. It was found that it was possible for both to work together in harmony for common ends. The question of miracles had ceased to be crucial; and what was most important of all, within nine years after 1876 seven of the most influential conservatives of the old school had died, while the younger men coming forward had most of them grown up in a liberal atmosphere. At length, at the National Conference in 1882 a liberal spirit prevailed, and with but a single dissenting voice an additional article was adopted opening the door again to those that had felt excluded by the action taken in 1870.²⁴

²⁴ Article X "While we believe that the Preamble and Articles of our Constitution fairly represent the opinions of the majority of our churches, yet we wish, distinctly, to put on record our declaration that they are no authoritative test of Unitarianism, and are not intended to exclude from our fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our purposes and practical aims."

Before continuing the account of developments in the denomination at large, it is necessary now to turn back and speak of the largely separate course of events in the Western Unitarian Conference.²⁵ This was the earliest of the conferences to be formed; for it antedated the National Conference by thirteen years, being organized at Cincinnati in 1852, when as yet there were not a dozen churches in the whole West, and those widely separated over a great territory with scanty means of intercommunication. Of necessity therefore the western churches led a more or less independent life, and developed their own characteristics. They occupied a singularly attractive missionary field, which was rapidly being occupied by a new population who having broken home ties and familiar traditions were ready to strike out new lines, and needed nothing more than competent leadership. In scores of promising young towns where their inherited religion had largely lost its hold upon the people and they were in danger of lapsing into irreligion, or even into active hostility to all the churches they knew, as supporters of outgrown superstitions, Unitarian preaching was eagerly welcomed.²⁶ But it was very difficult to get competent ministers for the many new openings, so that new churches were slowly established, and those prematurely formed were liable to fall to pieces for want of leaders. The rising anti-slavery feeling also distracted men from church activities, and after the war began more than half the ministers of churches already existing left their charges and went to the front, some as chaplains and some as soldiers; yet in spite of all the Conference still had some thirty-five churches at the war's end.

The Conference was organized on a broad, unsectarian Christian basis, and at once began vigorous work and sent three missionaries into the field; but already at the second meeting of the Conference it was deemed important, in order to prevent misunderstandings as to what Unitarians believe, to issue a statement of Unitarian views. Accordingly there was published a 'Report on Unitarian Views of Christ,' which was widely circulated as a basis for church extension.²⁷ The views,

²⁵ For authorities as to what follows, see contemporary issues of *Unity* (Chicago) and *The Unitarian* (Ann Arbor); J. T. Sunderland, *The Issue in the West* (Chicago, 1886); W. G. Gannett, *Unitarianism or Something Better* (Chicago, 1887); Mrs. S. C. Ll. Jones, *The Western Unitarian Conference, its Work and Mission*, Unity Mission Tract No. 38 (Chicago, 1890).

²⁶ Cf. *Unitarian Review*, xxviii, 39-61.

²⁷ Cf. *Reports presented to the Western Conference*, etc. (Louisville, 1854).

while not issued as a creed, were of course conservative; but early in the history of the Conference echoes of the Parker controversy appeared, though they were soon lost in the tumult of the war. The period immediately after the war showed great activity in organizing new churches and opening missionary stations, in which the western churches largely depended on themselves, though after the organization of the National Conference the Association kept a missionary Secretary in the West for nearly ten years, and all executive work was left to the Association, with a great falling off in local interest. But in 1875 the Conference had its own Secretary and again administered its own affairs with great energy. A Women's Conference, a Sunday-school Society and various state conferences were established; a western newspaper (the *Unity*) and a series of tracts were published. By this time doctrinal changes had taken place, in which it was evident that the West had moved faster than the East, and in the controversy over radicalism its sympathy went strongly with the radicals. In the Year-book episode the Conference unanimously protested against the policy pursued; and in 1875 it was unanimously resolved that 'the Western Conference conditions its fellowship on no dogmatic tests, but welcomes all thereto who desire to work with it in advancing the Kingdom of God'; and resolutions of good-will to both the Free Religious Association and the national Association were also passed. For some ten years after this a steady movement went on to purge the constitutions of state conferences and local churches of everything that might seem to limit perfect freedom of belief.

Some, however, were convinced that unlimited freedom involved grave danger to the cause, and one or two ministers had for this reason already withdrawn from the Conference. In some places, in fact, churches made up largely of come-outers had done the cause irreparable damage through irresponsible free-lances who had been accepted as Unitarian ministers. The new Secretary of the Conference had come to feel that the reason why the growth of the churches had not kept pace with the population was that they had not stood definitely enough for a few fundamental beliefs, but had been too hospitable to agnosticism, then the heresy most feared. He felt that the work in the West had suffered much from public misapprehension of the Unitarian position, and that the cure of the situation lay in committing the Conference to a platform which should make its basis clear, and thus deter

agnostics, materialists and Spiritualists from its churches. He strongly urged this action at the St. Louis Conference in 1885, though no immediate action was taken; but in the course of the following year the matter developed into what came to be known as 'the issue in the West.' As the date of the next Conference approached, the Secretary wrote and widely distributed among the churches an elaborate statement concerning the existing situation, and the matter claimed much attention at the Conference at Cincinnati in 1886. Only about a third of the churches sent delegates, but the division was sharp, and the debate was long, earnest and painful. Those on the one hand felt that the Conference should now clearly say in a few plain words that it stood for Christian belief in God, lest it be vitally weakened by unbelievers of every sort claiming the name of Unitarians.²⁸ On the other hand were some that felt that even the simplest statement or implication of theological beliefs was wrong in principle, and would in effect be a creed binding on all members of the Conference, and that this would mean the end of religious freedom for Unitarians. Both sides were equally devout, both held practically the same beliefs. It was the question whether to insist first of all upon beliefs, and whether it was willing to shut out any one from joining in its work simply because he did not profess certain beliefs. At the end it was resolved by a decisive majority 'that the Western Unitarian Conference conditions its fellowship on no dogmatic tests, but welcomes all who wish to join it to help establish Truth and Righteousness and Love in the world.'²⁹ The adoption of this resolution grievously disappointed the conservatives, who observed that the crucial religious words had been deliberately left out of the constitution, and the ethical words truth, righteousness and love had been substituted, so that even if an agnostic or an atheist sought admission as a Unitarian, the Conference would admit him. A few weeks later, therefore, the conservatives resigned from the Conference and organized a Western Unitarian Association to cooperate with the national Association in its missionary work. It had its own staff, opened a Chicago office, held a convention in Chicago with over thirty churches represented, maintained a monthly periodical, the *Unitarian*, and did what it could to discourage churches from cooperating with

²⁸ It was largely an academic question, for there were in fact only two or three such cases, and those were short-lived. The danger was theoretical rather than actual.

²⁹ Thus practically reaffirming the resolution voted in 1875, *v. supra*, p. 482.

the Western Conference; though as it left all its executive work to the national Association it was for practical purposes hardly more than an organization on paper.

The Conference at its next meeting in 1887 voted by a strong majority to publish a noble statement of the beliefs generally held by its members, complementing the resolution passed the previous year, and carefully avoiding any doctrinal terms liable to be found objectionable. Despite this, controversy spread widely both east and west, and even to England, where the 'western issue' agitated the English Unitarian newspapers even more than the American; and it was repeatedly charged that the Western Conference had adopted an atheistic and non-Christian basis. In fact this charge was so far credited that the national Association for several years declined to cooperate with the Western Conference in missionary work, and had its own western agent. The controversy went on for several years with neither side yielding an inch. To both it seemed at the time to involve a fundamental principle of vital importance, though in time they came to understand and trust each other; and in 1896 the western churches were all again united in the Western Conference, whose Secretary has since been a Superintendent for the national Association. Meanwhile the National Conference had widened its constitution in 1882 in the direction of freedom;³⁰ and the Western Conference in 1892 had at length declared its purpose to promulgate a religion in harmony with the statement referred to above. Thus the grave danger was averted which for some time had threatened that there might be two denominations of Unitarians in the West. The final sequel was that at the National Conference meeting in 1894 the Constitution was so revised as to satisfy both conservatives and radicals, and the action was taken unanimously by acclamation.³¹

From this point on there promised, after two generations of internal discord, to be a long period of wholesome growth. Under conditions thus guaranteeing full spiritual freedom, the life of the denomination

³⁰ *v. supra*, p. 480.

³¹ "These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man . . . and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

Formulated by the Rev. J. T. Sunderland, presented by the Rev. M. J. Savage, amended by the Rev. George L. Chaney.

bid fair to be healthy and its progress steady. New projects could now be undertaken with good heart. An important and promising missionary enterprise in Japan was undertaken in 1889, to be sustained by funds previously used for work in India, until the death of its leader made it necessary to discontinue the mission there. In 1896 a work of great and growing importance among the younger generation was begun in the formation of the Young People's Religious Union, later named the American Unitarian Youth. Finally at the end of the century came a notable celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the American Unitarian Association. The attendance was large and enthusiastic, not only of Unitarians from all parts of the country, but also of representatives from nearly all countries abroad where liberal Christianity had been organized. This occasion brought to full realization the fact that the Unitarian movement had found its mission, and that its adherents in all lands are united by a common faith and devoted to a common purpose.

At this point, where American Unitarianism had attained more than double the strength it had when the National Conference was formed in 1865, it is convenient to conclude for the present our survey of its history. It was, indeed, at first intended to carry the history through the first quarter of the twentieth century, ending with the centenary of the British and American Associations. But real history has to be written in the past tense, and if it attempts to deal with the present it is liable to be merely a chronicle of what is still in process, whose setting in the whole historical stream is not yet clear, inasmuch as we are not yet in a position to see it in proper focus, and to judge its pregnant meanings fairly. However, we may at least glance at current developments, and ask what they seem to hint for the future. We see the body at last becoming efficiently organized with a broader outlook, the National Conference rechristened as the General Conference, and the National Alliance as the General Alliance; and the circle made complete by the organization of the Unitarian Laymen's League; the national Association transformed into a delegate body, truly representative of the churches, with its policies reorganized and its invested funds greatly increased. We see Unitarianism extend its interest to the world at large in the organization in 1900 of the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, later

reorganized as the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom, whose purpose is to unite those in all lands who are striving to unite pure religion and perfect liberty; and when wars devastate half the world, we see the Unitarian Service Committee, joined by many from other bodies, take a leading part in relieving distress without regard to race or creed or nation. Thus, if we may venture from the tendencies it is manifesting in the twentieth century to infer how Unitarianism may be expected to develop in the future, we may hazard the judgment that while it shows no signs of reverting to forms of doctrine that it has outgrown, the present tendency seems to be to attach less importance to theological doctrines or ecclesiastical traditions, and to place increasing emphasis on the application of the principles and spirit of Christianity to the life of man in his social relations, while it tends to ever broader interpretations of its Christian inheritance as it advances toward an ideal goal of universal religion and universal ethics.⁸²

Before taking final leave of our subject, it is proper that we should give a brief retrospective glance and ask how far this history has succeeded in accomplishing its purpose. As stated at the beginning, the undertaking was not to present a history of Unitarianism as a doctrinal system, but to trace the development of three controlling principles that have characterized the movement, namely: complete mental freedom, unrestricted reason, and generous tolerance of differences, in religion. The movement began by calling in question the authority of the creeds that restricted the thinking of men in religion. But this step did allow complete freedom to religious thought; for men abandoned the authority of the creeds only to substitute that of Scripture as supreme. The Socinians in Poland came to realize that in at least some cases even Scripture had to be submitted to the test of reason. In England, indeed, this transition came slowly, and it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that Unitarians, following the leadership of Martineau, reluctantly began to abandon scripture as the prime source of religious truth; and the Americans, stimulated by the influence of Emerson and Parker, took the same step, and the leaders of their thought have now for two generations ceased to seek for proof-texts as authority for their religious beliefs. Acceptance of mutual

⁸² See an editorial by the Rev. S. J. Barrows on 'The Unitarian Name, its Growth and Application in the United States,' in the *Christian Register*, May 6, 13, 1886.

tolerance as a guiding principle in religious thinking has been lost to be achieved. Of course it is inevitable that free minds guided by the individual reason and conscience, and influenced by different factors, should often reach differing conclusions, and it is natural that having reached them they should conflict with each other. Hence have arisen most of the quarrels that have distracted Christendom. Now there are but two ways in which such conflicts may be resolved. The parties may abandon the hope of mental freedom and submit to the judgment of another, or else they may waive the effort to think alike as futile, or at all events incidental, while they agree nevertheless in working for the ends they have in common. This is the way of tolerance, in which men, though disagreeing in incidental matters, allow each other equal liberty of belief, and unite happily for practical ends which they have in common.

Freedom, reason and tolerance then are not the final goals to be aimed at in religion, but only conditions under which the true ends may best be attained. The ultimate ends proper to a religious movement are two, *personal and social*; the elevation of personal character, and the perfecting of the social organism, and the success of a religious body may best be judged by the degree to which it attains these ends. Only if the Unitarian movement, true to its principles of freedom, reason, and tolerance, goes on through them and finds its fulfillment in helping men to live worthily as children of God, and to make their institutions worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven, will its mission be accomplished.

PRONOUNCING TABLE

THE PRONUNCIATION of the foreign names (chiefly Hungarian) frequently occurring in the text is likely to prove a stumbling-block to the reader. The table here given aims to indicate the approximate pronunciation. Note that in Hungarian words the marks over vowels denote the vowel quantity; but that the *accent* is invariably on the first syllable.

In the table below,

1. *e* is given the short sound
2. *ö* and *ü* are sounded as in German
3. *dh* is sounded like *th* in *the*
4. *H* denotes a strongly aspirated *h*
5. *LY* sounds as in *halyard*
6. *ñ* sounds as in *cañon*
7. *zh* is like *z* in *azure* or the French *j*

Achacy (aw'-haw-tsee)
 Adámos (aw'-dah-mosh)
 Agh (awg)
 Alabor (aw'-law-bor)
 Aladár (aw'-law-dahr)
 Alföld (awl'-föld)
 Almási (awl'-mah-she)
 Alvinczi (awl'-vint-see)
 Antal (awn'-tawl)
 Apácza (aw'-pah-tsaw)
 Apafi (aw'paw-fee)
 Aran (aw'-rawn)
 Árkos (ahr'-kosh)
 Áron (ah'-ron)
 Árpád (ahr'-pahd)
 Attila (at'-ti-la)
 Augustinowics (ow'-goos-tin-o-vich)

Bágyon (bah'-jon)
 Balogh (baw'-log)
 Bánffy (bahn'-fy)
 Bánfi (bahn'-fy)
 Báránya (bahr'-ahn-yaw)
 Barát (baw'-raht)
 Bárcsai (bahr'-choy)
 Básta (bash'-taw)
 Báthory (bah'-to-ry)
 Beke (be'ke)
 Békés (bay'-kaysh)
 Belső (bel'-shö)
 Bełzyce (bel'-zhyt'-se)

Benczedi (ben'-tse-dy)
 Benedek (ben'-e-dek)
 Benkő (ben'-kö)
 Berzeviczy (bezh'-e-vit-sy)
 Bestercze (besh'-ter-tze)
 Betlen (bet'-len)
 Bethlem (bet'-lem)
 Biró (bee'-ro)
 Bocskai (boch'-koy)
 Bod (bod)
 Bodöczy (bod'-öt-sy)
 Boldizsar (bol'-dizh-ahr)
 Borbély (bor'-bayLY)
 Borbis (bor'-bish)
 Boros (bor'-osh)
 Borsos (borsh'-osh)
 Bőződ (bōz'öd)
 Brassó (braw'-sho)
 Broser (bro'-sher)
 Brzeźin (bzhhez'-in)
 Buda-Pest (boo'-daw-pesht)
 Budny (bood'-ny)
 Budziński (bood-zhiñ'-skce)
 Buzogány (boo'-zo-gahñ)

Chmielnik (hmee-el'-nik)
 Cluj (cloozh)
 Cseglédi (tscg'-le-dee)
 Csenger (cheng'-er)
 Cwm Cothi (coom-co'-thi)
 Czechowicz (chch-o'-vich)

Dajka (doy'-kaw)	Hunyad (hoon'-yawd)
Dávid (dah'-vid)	Hunyadi (hoon'-yaw-dee)
Déak (day'-awk)	Huszt (hoost)
Debreczen (deb'-re-tsen)	
Deés (de'-aysh)	Iffiu (if'-fee-oo)
Déva (day'-vaw)	Illia (il'-lee-ah)
Domokos (dom'-o-kosh)	Imre (im'-re)
Dragomir (draw'-go-meer)	István (isht'-vahn)
Dudith (doo'-dit)	Istvánfi (isht'-vahn-fee)
	Izsak (izh'-awk)
Éger (ay'-ger)	
Égri (ay'-gree)	Jakab (yaw'-kawb)
Elek (el'-ek)	Jankovich (yawn'-ko-vich)
Endre (en'-dre)	János (yahn'-osh)
Enjed (en'-yed)	Jász-Berényi (yahs'-ber-ayn-yeec)
Enjedi (en'-yed-ee)	Jókai (yo'-koy)
Eőssi (e'-ösh-ee)	Josika (yo'-she-kaw)
Eppel (ep'-pel)	József (yoo'-zhef)
Erdély (er'-day-ly)	Juhász (yoo'-hahs)
Erdő-Szent György (er'-dö-sent jörj)	
Erzsébet (er'-zhay-bet)	Kálnok (kahl'-nok)
Esperes (esh'-per-esh)	Kálmáncschi (kahl'-mahn-che-hee)
Esztergom (es'-ter-gom)	Kanyaró (kawn'-yaw-ro)
	Kárádi (kah'-rah-dee)
Farkas (fawr'-kawsh)	Károli (kah'-ro-lee)
Ferencz (fer'-ents)	Károly (kah'-rol-ly)
Ferró (fer'-ro)	Károlyfehérvár (kah'-rol-ly-fe-hayr-vahr)
Fiátfalva (fee'-aht-fawl-vaw)	Kassa (kaw'-shaw)
Fogaras (fo'-gaw-rawsh)	Katona (kaw'-to-naw)
Forgács (for'-gahch)	Kemény (kem'-ayn)
Fosztó (fos'-to)	Kendi (ken'-dee)
	Keresztény Magvető (ker'-es-tayn mawg'-ve-tö)
Gáspár (gahs'-pahr)	Keserői (kesh'-e-rü-ee)
Geleji (gel'-e-yeec)	Kolozsmonostor (kol'-ozh-mon-osh-tor)
Gergely (gerr'-gel-ly)	Kolozsvár (kol'-ozh-vahr)
Gerlicze (gerr'-litz-e)	Koncz (konts)
Gesztü (ges'-tee)	Körspatak (kör'-ish-paw-tawk)
Géza (gay'-zaw)	Körmöczy (kör'-mō-tsy)
Görgény (gör'-gayñ)	Körösfői (kör'-ösh-fő-ee)
Górski (goor'-skce)	Köröspeterd (kör'-ösh-pet-erd)
Götzi (göt'-see)	Kossuth (kosh'-oot)
Grabowski (grab'-of'-skce)	Kovács (kov'-ahtsh)
Grzegorz (gzhe'-gozh)	Kövár (kö'-vah-ree)
György (jörj)	Kováts (kov'-ahtsh)
Gyulafehérvár (joo'-law-fe-hayr-vahr)	Kraków (krah'-koof)
	Küküllő (kü'-kül-lő)
Háromszék (hah'-rom-sake)	
Heltai (hel'-toy)	Láborfalva (lah'-bor-fawl-vaw)
Homoród-Korácsfalva (hom'-o-rode kor'-ahch-on-fawl-vaw)	Lajos (law'-yosh)
Horvath (hor'-vaht)	Łaski (wah'-skce)

László (lahs'-lo)	Paweł (pah'-vel)
Lázár (lah'-zahr)	Pawiński (paw-viŋ'-akee)
Lécsfalva (laych'-fawl-vaw)	Pécs (paych)
Lelesz (lel'-esh-ee)	Pécsi (pay'-chee)
Llandysul (lan-dys'-ul)	Péterfalva (pay'-ter-fawl-vaw)
Llwynrhydowen (loo-in-rd-ow'-en)	Pétrovics (pet'-ro-vics)
Llwynygroes (loo-in-u-gro'-es)	Pozsony (po'-zhoŋ)
Lorinczy (lo'-rin-tsee)	Pray (pry)
Łucławice (loots-wah-veet'-see)	
Lwów (lvoof)	Radecki (rah-dets'-kee)
	Rádnoth (rahd'-not)
Madan (mad'-an)	Raduli (rad-oo'-lee)
Magyar (mawd'-yawr)	Rákóczy (rah'-ko-tsee)
Máramaros (mah'-raw-maw-rosh)	Raków (rah'-koof)
Márkos (mahr'-kosh)	Ráv (rahv)
Marles (mahr'-les)	Ravasz (raw'-vawsh)
Maros-Vásárhely (maw'-rosh-vah'-shahr-heer)	Révész (ray'-vase)
	Rhédei (ray'-de-ee)
Martunuzzi (mahr-tee-noot'-zi)	
Megyes (med'-yesh)	Sándor (shahn'-dor)
Mélius (may'-lee-oosh)	Sebestyén (sheb'-esht-yane)
Melotai (mel'-o-toy)	Segesvár (sheg'-esh-vahr)
Mihály (mee'-hahly)	Sepsi-Szent Gyorgy (shep'-shi-sent-jorj)
Miklós (mik'-losh)	Sepsi Szent Iványi (shep'-she-sent ee-vahŋ-ee)
Mikó (mee'-ko)	Siedmogród (shed'-mo-grood)
Miles (mil'-esh)	Sigismund (siŋ'-iss-mund)
Mirszló (mir'-is-lo)	Sikó (she'-ko)
Miskolcz (mish'-kolts)	Simen (she'-mane)
Mitrovics (mit'-ro-vich)	Simon (she'-mon)
Mohács (mo'-hahch)	Skaricza (shkaw'-rit-saw)
Monostor (mon'-osh-tor)	Slavkov (slahv'-kof)
Mózes (mo'-zesh)	Sobieski (so-bee-es'-kee)
	Solyman (so'-ly-man)
Nagy (nawj)	Suki (shoo'-kee)
Nagy Harsány (nawj hawr'-shawn)	Suleiman (soo'-lay-ee-mahn)
Nagyvárad (nawj'-vahr-awd)	Szabó (saw'-bo)
Náprágy (nah'-prahj)	Szádecki (sah'-det-skce)
Niemojewski (nem-o-yef'-skee)	Szaknovics (sawk'-no-vich)
Nyárad Szent Márton (nah'-rawd-sent mahr'-ton)	Szálay (sah'-loy)
Nylas (nee'-lawsh)	Szántó (sahn'-to)
	Szász-szebes (sahs'-seb-esh)
Ovár (o'-vahr)	Szász-város (sahs'-vah-rosh)
Ovári (o'-vahr-ee)	Szatmár (sawt'-mahr)
	Szeben (seb'-en)
Paksi (pawk'-shee)	Székelly (say'-kel-y)
Pál (pahl)	Székelly-Keresztur (say'-kel-y-ker'-es-toor)
Pantydeföld (pant-y-de-vah'-id)	Székes-fehérvár (say'-kesh-fey-hayr-vahr)
Pap (pawp)	Szekler (sek'-ler)
Pápai (pah'-poy)	Szent Ábrahám (sent ahb'-raw-hahm)
Páriz (pah'-riz)	Szentábrahám (sent-ahb'-raw-hah-mee)

Szent Gerlicze (sent gerr'-lit-se)	Udvárhely (ood'-vahr-bel'v)
Szent Háromság (sent hah'-rom-shahg)	Ujfalú (oo'y'-faw-loo)
Szent Iványi (sent' iv-ahn-ye)	Urmössy (ür'-mō-shy)
Szent Király (sent' keer-ah'v)	Utca (oot'-sah)
Szent Rontás (szent ron'-tahsh)	Uzoni (oo'-zo-nee)
Szerencs (ser'-ents)	Vadad (vaw'-dawd)
Szilágy (sil'-ahj)	Valaszuti (vaw'-law-soo-ty)
Szikszó (sik'-so)	Várad (vah'-rawd)
Szímánd (see'-mawnd)	Vécs (vaych)
Szőkefalva (só'-ke-fawl-vaw)	Verencz (ver'-ents)
	Vercss (ver'-esh)
Tamás (taw'-mahs)	Veszély (ves'-aylv)
Taszycki (tah-shits'-kee)	
Teif (ti'-vy)	Wiszowaty (vish-o-vah'-ty)
Temes (tem'-esh)	Witrelin (vit-rel'-in)
Temesvár (tem'-esh-vahr)	Wujek (voo'-yek)
Tisza (tis'-aw)	
Tolna (tol'-naw)	Yr Ymofynnydd (ur um-o-vun'-udh)
Tolnai (tol'-noy)	
Torda (tor'-daw)	Zapolya (zah'-pol-yaw)
Toroczkai (tor'-ots-koy)	Zips (tsips)
Toroczkó (tor'-ots-ko)	Zsigmond (zhig'-mond)
Tóth (tote)	Zsombor de Szász (zhom'-bor-de-sahs)
Trauzner (trowts-ner)	Zsuki (zhoo'-kee)

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